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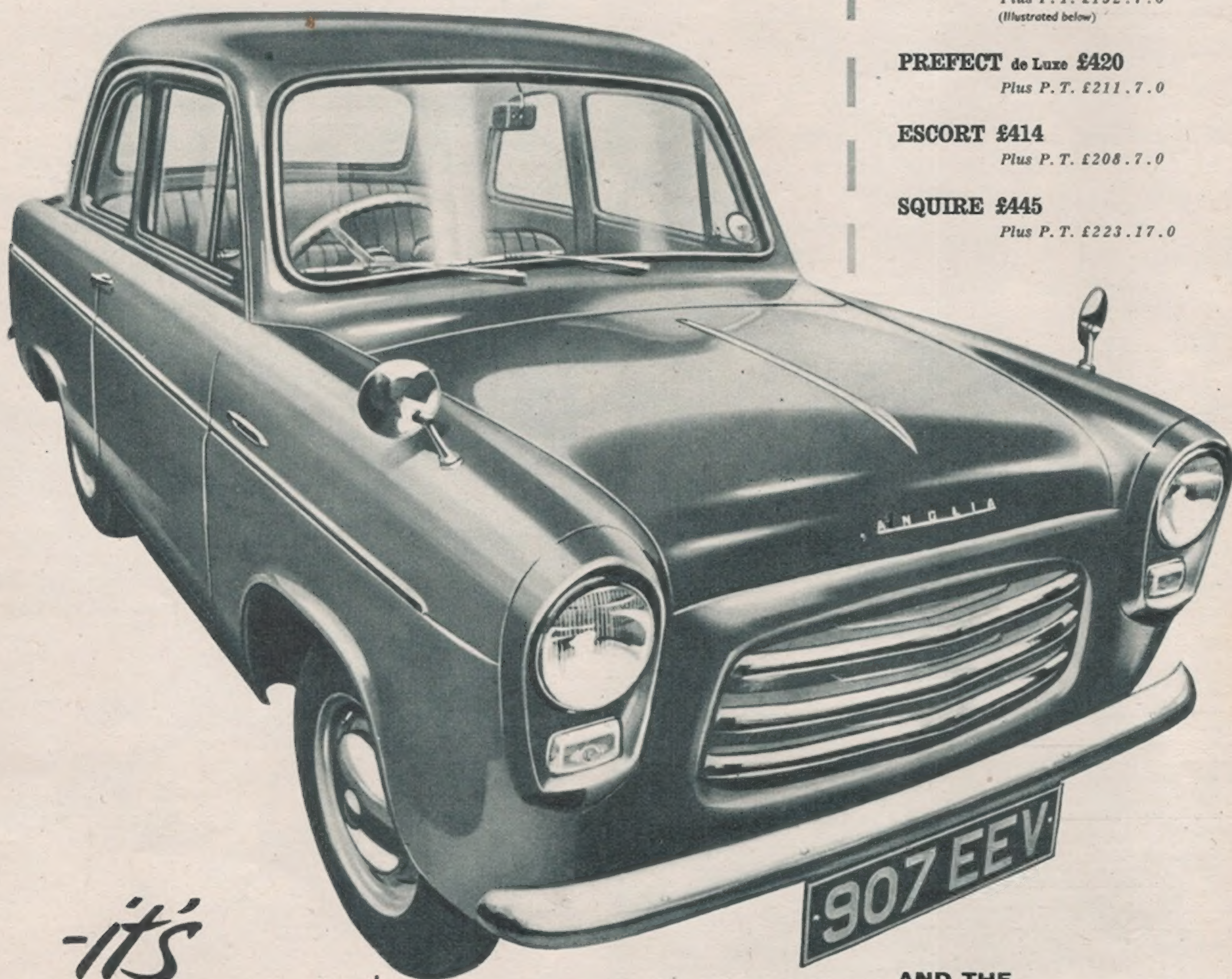


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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR



With one of his two sons, Charles Terrot inspects his tropical fish

SUCCESS was a family tradition. To Charles Terrot. His father was a general, his grandfather a canon, his great-grandfather a bishop of Edinburgh and his great-great-grandfather a governor of Gibraltar. "There's also a great-uncle somewhere," he says, "who became a tennis champion."

Terrot, author of "A Home Of Their Own," on page 7, "arrived" at the age of seventeen when his "Young Colt's Diary," about life at Harrow School, was reviewed with enthusiasm. He went on to write film scripts at Ealing studios, and after the war wrote two delightful novels, "An Alligator Named Daisy" and

"The Angel Who Pawned Her Harp." He has just adapted "A Home Of Their Own" for TV, and a novel on Florence Nightingale, "The Passionate Pilgrim," is to be filmed in Hollywood.

In the wartime army Terrot put a passion for photography to use when he organized a special unit to photograph enemy-held river crossings in Normandy at night, using infra-red techniques for the first time in the field. "To get prints dried in a hurry we shipped out scores of hair driers from England," he recalls. Once his jeep overturned and he broke his spine in two places.

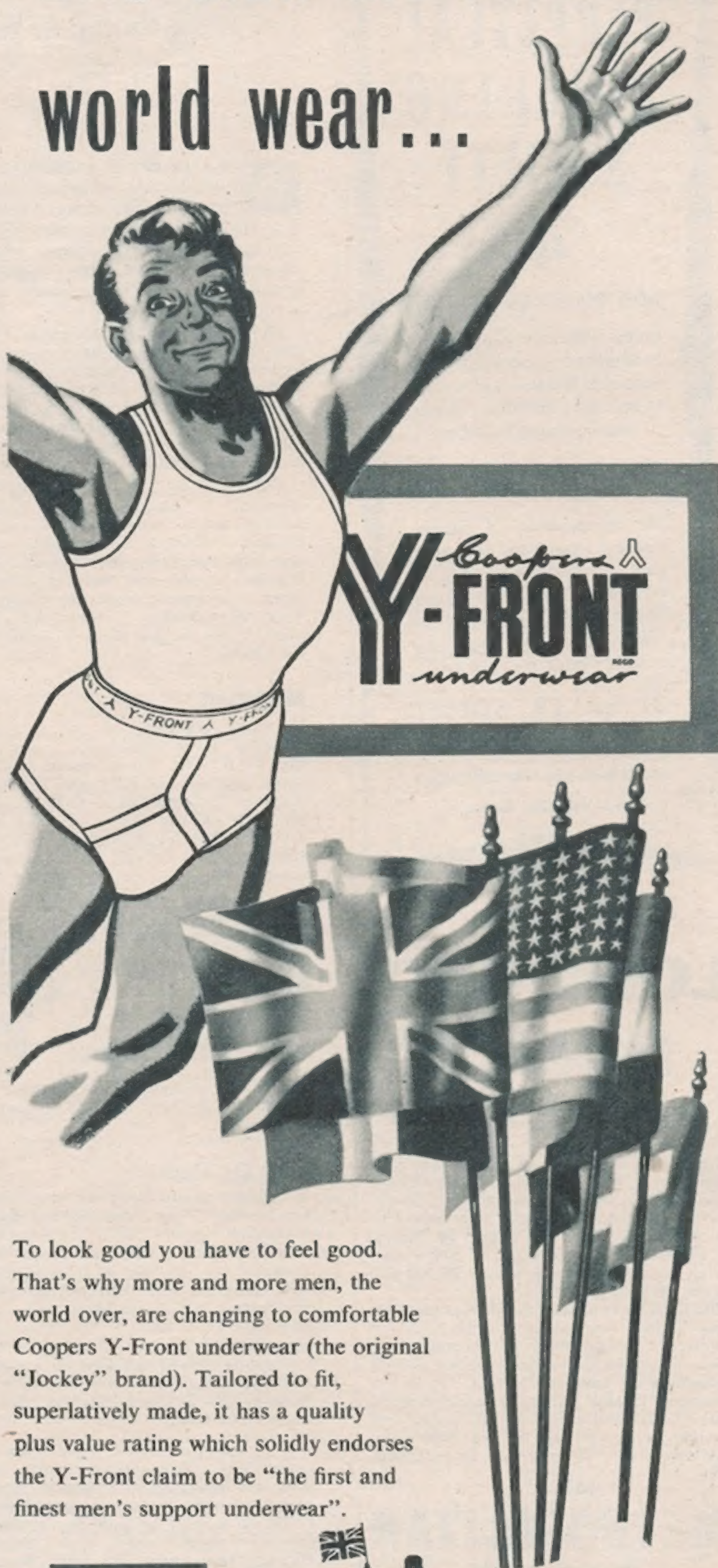
Today Terrot, who is thirty-seven and was married in 1943, lives in a beautiful house near Godalming, in Surrey, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. He has two sons, Michael and Anthony, and a tough Staffordshire bull terrier he calls Crumpet. In his four-acre garden is a separate study housing a Queen Anne desk, a Chippendale chair and a tank of tropical fish.

FOR Douglas Mays, who drew this week's cover, a collection of his JOHN BULL cover paintings has replaced the family snapshot album. "Having four daughters," he says, "gave me an interest in drawing children and in getting their antics down in pictures." He first showed them littering a seaside boarding house with crabs and seaweed. Since then they have splashed through puddles, fought with pillows, bombarded windows with snowballs, simulated sleep while waiting for Santa Claus, and skylarked their way through nearly a hundred coverloads of mischief. "Most of their tricks," says Mays ruefully, "have actually happened."

The original cover-kids have grown up—the eldest is twenty-five, the youngest sixteen—but Mays retains his enthusiasm for children. "Between three months and under-ten they are delightful."

Aged fifty-six, he works at home in a twelve-roomed Buckinghamshire house of steel and concrete, so unusual in design that it is known locally as The Aeroplane. His hardest effort is made at weekends. "I prefer to enjoy my pleasure when other people cannot," says Mays, who delights in being different. In 1926, when the General Strike kept him from work, he decided to grow a beard—"in the height of the non-beard age. I haven't shaved since."

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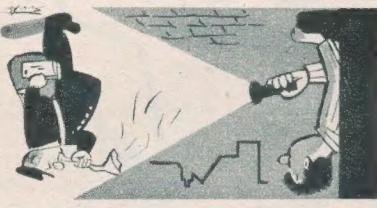
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WHEN to eat is a question on which my husband and I have always disagreed. He is a stickler for regular meals with nothing eaten in between them because, he says, the digestive system can cope more easily with a routine.

But I prefer to eat whenever I feel like it, no matter how often. I believe this is far better and more natural than the arbitrary ritual of regular meals, which seem to be just a convenient way of dividing the day into three more or less equal parts. N. C., Chippingham, Wilts.

"As far as the working of the stomach is concerned, it doesn't matter when people eat," says a doctor. "There is no question of the digestion benefiting from routine. But regular meals are naturally much more convenient from the point of view of running a household, and most stomachs get used to them and like them."

Recently visiting a village near Brussels, I was awakened each morning at 6 a.m. by a weird wailing noise, repeated at intervals. I did not discover the cause of it until the last morning of my stay, when I rose early and found it was the postman sounding his arrival on a battered brass horn while delivering the first year.



post, a common occurrence in Belgium.—M. J. TURNER, Preston, Lancs.

Left Or Right?

My nine-year-old daughter is normally left-handed ("Are You Really Right-Handed?" John Bull, July 7), but when she first wrote, at about four years of age, she did so from right to left, using her left hand and reversing the letters which could be reversed, such as "D" and "G." This continued for about a year, but eventually school teaching triumphed and she began to write normally.—Mrs. S. R. THOMAS, Catcott, Bridgewater, Somerset.

I considered myself to be completely right-handed until one day last year, when I was counting paper money. To my amazement, I could do so only by holding the notes in my right hand and flicking through them with my left. Now I have a new respect for the left hand, which I once considered "useless."—R. DONALDSON, Kirkcaldy, Fife.

Family Logbook

Our family does not keep a picture-and-story scrapbook ("Free Speech," June 30) but circulates instead a log-book of the daily doings of all its members every month—from Willie's exciting Davy Crockett evening at the local carnival to Uncle John's latest triumphs at the horticultural show. The log, which dispenses with the usual letters, is sent to every member

- Eating by the clock
- News for the family
- Reviving the Health Scheme

Free Speech

of our scattered family, being added to by the successive recipients as it goes.—A. HAIN, Beaconsfield Road, Bristol, 4.

I was giving my third pint of blood at a local hospital when the doctor came in with the next donor and said: "I want to introduce this gentleman to you. You both have a rare type of blood—rhesus negative—and should get on well together." The doctor seemed amused at his own joke, and my successor and I smiled, somewhat embarrassed, at each other. But the joke proved to be on the doctor, for "this gentleman" and I were later married.—Mrs. M. J., Accrington, Lancs.

Year's Respite

The National Health Service costs £500 million a year—about £10 per person. But this huge sum could be drastically reduced if a tax refund who resigned from the scheme for one year. The tax refund could be reduced hand in hand with the resulting fall in the cost of the National Health Service.—G. REMINGTON, Watchet, Somerset.

Unopened Goods

Tattershall Castle's medieval fire-places may not have reached America ("Open To View," John Bull, June 30), but the fourteenth-century Norland Hall in this locality did—in 1912.

The late William Randolph Hearst bought it, had it dismantled and shipped to San Francisco. But I understand the Hall has never been reassembled. After forty-four years it is still in the packing cases in which it crossed the Atlantic.—JOYCE HARRISON, Halifax, Yorkshire.

Hearst, an American newspaper owner, died in 1937. During his lifetime he collected a vast number of objects d'art on his behalf. Hearst

This is one of those occasions when even a friendly game of beach cricket needs a stern-voiced impartial umpire. The pride of the school first eleven was all set to wind up his century with a slashing six into the sea. And now he's fallen to a battered bucket and a trick of fate. But Mays, who understands children (see "Re-ports from the Editor," page 3) says Father won't be grinning much longer. He's got to convince the batsman that cricket-ing laws are mellowed by sea air—or tell an indignant five-year-old why that wasn't a catch.

THE COVER

In Harmony
The French have a saying which might have qualified as one of your quotations on music (John Bull, June 30). It is that "The French are made to compose music, the Italians to sing it, the Germans to play it, Americans to pay for it."—Mrs. MANN, Rawden, near Leeds, Yorks.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post.

Beer By Accident
On a recent conducted tour of a brewery, I was intrigued to know where the original supply of yeast came from. My guide's answer was that the founder of the firm probably got it from another brewer.—Mrs. G. A., Grimsby.

Protection For Flowers
Reading about the Beinn Eighe national nature reserve ("Guardian," June 30) reminded me how flowers are protected in Bavaria. Some of the hotels there go to the trouble of displaying vases of the local wild flowers with the names affixed. Those of the protected adds to the visitors' interest and helps to save the rarer flowers.—F. W., London, S.W.17.

after Hearst's death. not opened until its sale in London craves for twenty-one years. It was chased for him and was stored in the Great Chamber of Gilling Castle, Yorkshire, for example, was purchased them. Some panelling from never saw many of these and never unpacked them.



JOHN BULL

PHYLIS BENTLEY



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"It's going to be fearfully dangerous," Mark said, as his mother came to the door nervously holding her apron

A home of their own

by **CHARLES TERROT**

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

At last the Morvens were moving in—and facing disaster. . . . Only the old colonel could help them

COLONEL HALLERFIELD made a last, supreme effort to concentrate, but the noise from below was too much for him. He took off his reading glasses, snapped his book shut and stared irascibly at his wife, who sat knitting on the opposite side of the fireplace.

"Those youngsters downstairs are making more noise over their packing than an artillery regiment striking camp," he said tetchily.

"Never mind, Arthur, they'll be gone tomorrow." A placating smile touched Bridget Hallerfield's plain, gentle face.

The colonel's muttered reply was lost to her as another rumble and protesting screech from the basement flat penetrated their floorboards.

"What did you say, dear?" Bridget asked.

"It doesn't matter." The colonel gave a suffering sigh. "I think I'll go along to the club."

"All right, dear. But one thing before you go."

"Well?" Her husband rose and tried to sound impatient and preoccupied.

"I've been thinking we should offer some sort of help to the Morvens. Moving house is such

a difficult business. I'm sure they would appreciate anything we could do for them."

"Such as what? D'you think I should roll up my shirt sleeves, go down there and add to that confounded row they're making?"

"No, dear," Bridget said. She put down her knitting. "I'm sure Mr. Morven wouldn't expect you to do that. But we might offer them breakfast tomorrow. It would be a help to Mrs. Morven, as they'll probably want to get off early."

"Breakfast?" the colonel echoed. "But dammit, Bridget, we hardly know the people. We've done little more than pass the time of day with them since they've been here."

"All the more reason to make up for our unneighbourliness now."

The colonel paused in the act of shrugging on his coat. "Unneighbourliness? How d'you mean? We've always done the civil thing by them. Had them up here for dinner once, didn't we?"

"We did, Arthur. Once."

"And, as I recall, the girl never stopped talking and young Morven hardly opened his mouth the whole evening."

His wife rose to help him as he fumingly tried to adjust his scarf. She said: "Hasn't it occurred to you, Arthur, that they might have been a bit shy? You don't mean to, dear, but you know you can give the most terrifying impression of a martinet to people who don't know you. The Morvens are very young—"

"Bless my soul! Did they think I was going to eat 'em?"

"Probably." Bridget laughed gently. "You're a peppery old darling to people who don't know you well. The truth is, we've kept ourselves to ourselves rather too much, and naturally youngsters like the Morvens would hardly like to presume. We're a stand-offish nation, Arthur. Continentals and Americans are always saying so, and they're right. So much ice round us and we never try to break it."

The colonel frowned. All this stuff about ice and foreigners . . . what had that got to do with giving the Morvens breakfast? Bridget had such a tiresome habit of wandering off the point. But he could see she was in earnest and he wanted to please her.

"All right, dear," he said. "Ask 'em if you want to."

SHE saw him out of their shabby Kensington flat, in which they had lived since his retirement. Then, soon after he had gone, she went down to the basement flat.

The front door was opened to her by Mark Morven, an impudent but attractive little boy with ginger hair and freckled face. His games of "cowboys and indians" in the back-garden had sometimes met with disapproving grunts from the colonel, but Bridget Hallerfield had always thought him an attractive child.

"Hallo," he said cautiously. "Have you come to complain? Mummy's always saying you will when I make a lot of noise."

"Oh no, Mark!" she answered quickly. It was sad to think that his parents were so wary of their nearest neighbours. "But I'd like a word with your mother, if I may."

"Okay, I'll give her a call—she's cooking supper now. Daddy's having his last bath and has gone to sleep in it."

Mark called to his mother, then turned back to the unexpected visitor. "We're going to a real home of our own tomorrow," he said proudly.

Bridget smiled at him. "I know—I expect you're very excited."

"You bet! Daddy's bought a car—it cost fifty pounds—and it's going to be fearfully dangerous getting there."

As he spoke, his mother came to the door nervously fingering her apron. Bridget had always thought of Andrea Morven as a demure, pretty young woman, but now the harassed

expression on the girl's face made her hasten to explain the reason for her call.

At once Andrea's expression relaxed. "How very kind of you, Mrs. Hallerfield," she said. "But are you sure we won't be a frightful nuisance?"

"Not at all," Bridget said. "Now what time would you like the meal?"

"Well, what time do you normally have breakfast?"

"Tomorrow we'll have it any time to suit you."

"Would half-past seven be too early?"

Bridget managed to conceal her dismay. "No—no, any time."

"Oh, that would be simply wonderful. Now we'll be able to pack all the kitchen stuff this evening."

ANDREA'S very real gratitude was quite apparent. And Bridget found herself warming to the girl. Suddenly she felt she wanted to say something more, but did not quite know how to put it.

"I'd like to wish you all the luck in the world," she began hesitantly. "It's—it's a very big experience—moving to the first home you can really call your own. I can imagine how you feel."

Andrea's tired face broke into a smile. "Why, thank you, Mrs. Hallerfield!" she exclaimed in a rather surprised tone.

A moment later she closed the door and went back into the dismal vault where she, her husband and Mark had lived for four years. The daylight filtering through a small window was supplemented by a naked electric-light bulb which shone down on packing-cases, stacked chairs and rolled curtains. She thought: *How I hate this dump—but heavens, weren't we lucky to snap it up when we did! At least, Pete has never had to live with in-laws.*

It was when her husband had finished his National Service that they had taken the flat, and at first the feeling of total independence had blinded them to its drawbacks. Then Mark was very ill with pneumonia and they decided they must start saving to buy a home in the country, whatever the effort cost them.

It had meant cutting out simple pleasures like cinemas and dances, giving up cigarettes, doing without holidays and seeking in every way to economize on housekeeping. Andrea had taken an uncongenial part-time job as secretary to the headmistress of a kindergarten school, and Peter had swotted up at nights to pass his final engineering exams. Now they had achieved their goal. Peter had landed a good job with an engineering firm in Oxford, and they had bought a country cottage not far away.

Peter, in pyjamas, came through from the bathroom, rubbing his head with a towel. He was a large-scale edition of his son—ginger-haired, attractive, sometimes exasperating—but with an easy-going sense of humour without which his marriage to a girl who was inclined to be highly strung might not have worked out. They had married very young.

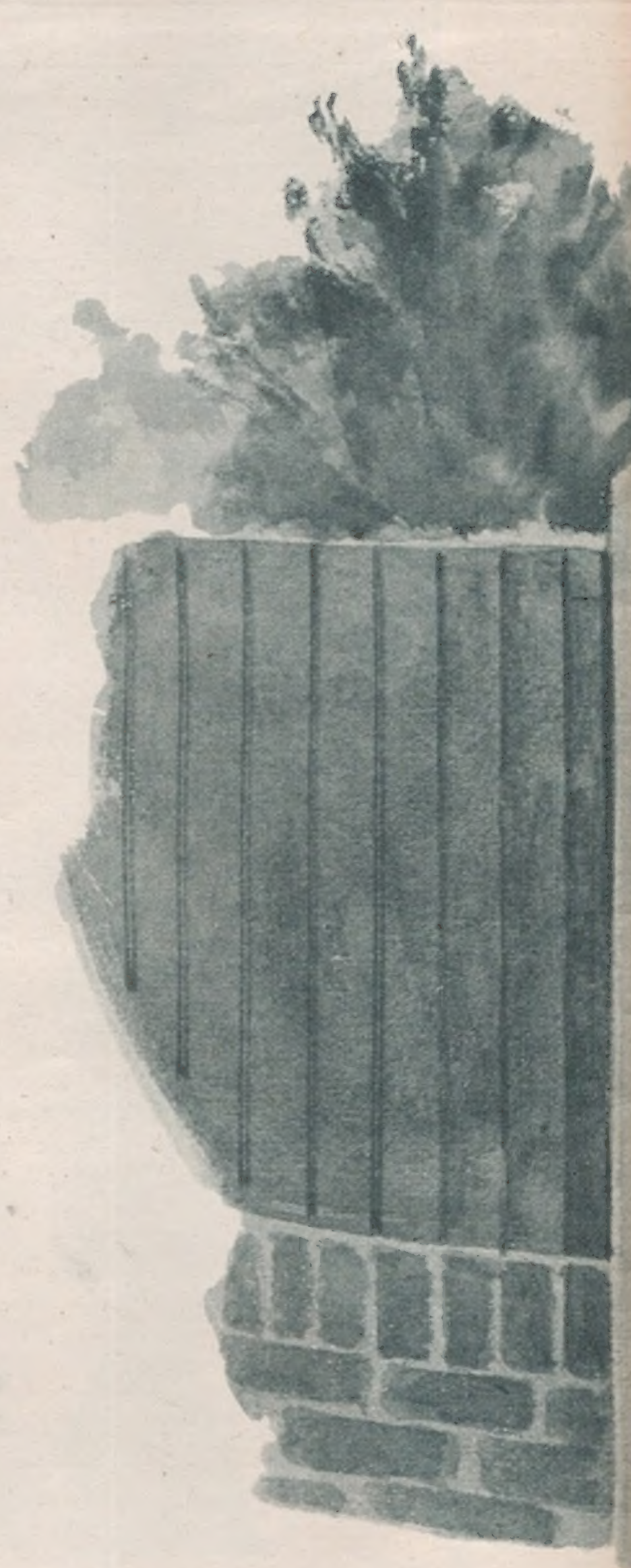
She told him about the Hallerfield's invitation. He was as surprised as she had been.

"Mrs. H. always looks such a disdainful old aristocrat to me," he said. "And the colonel's such a ferocious fire-eater. Still, maybe we got them wrong. It's certainly nice of them to offer to help out tomorrow."

Next morning Bridget Hallerfield rose at six, to give herself plenty of time to prepare the Morvens' breakfast, for her cooking was sketchy. About half an hour later, the colonel, sleepy and bad-tempered, wandered through to the kitchen and found her looking very distressed.

"What the devil's wrong, Bridget?" he demanded.

"Look!" She pointed to the stove, covered in the sticky white lava of porridge which had boiled over. "And that's not all," Bridget said unhappily. "While I was laying the



The house agent had been waiting for hours. "I'm afraid I have some disturbing news," he said

dining-room table, that horrible great cat—the one with stripes like a tiger—got in here somehow and was out like a flash with my fishcake mixture."

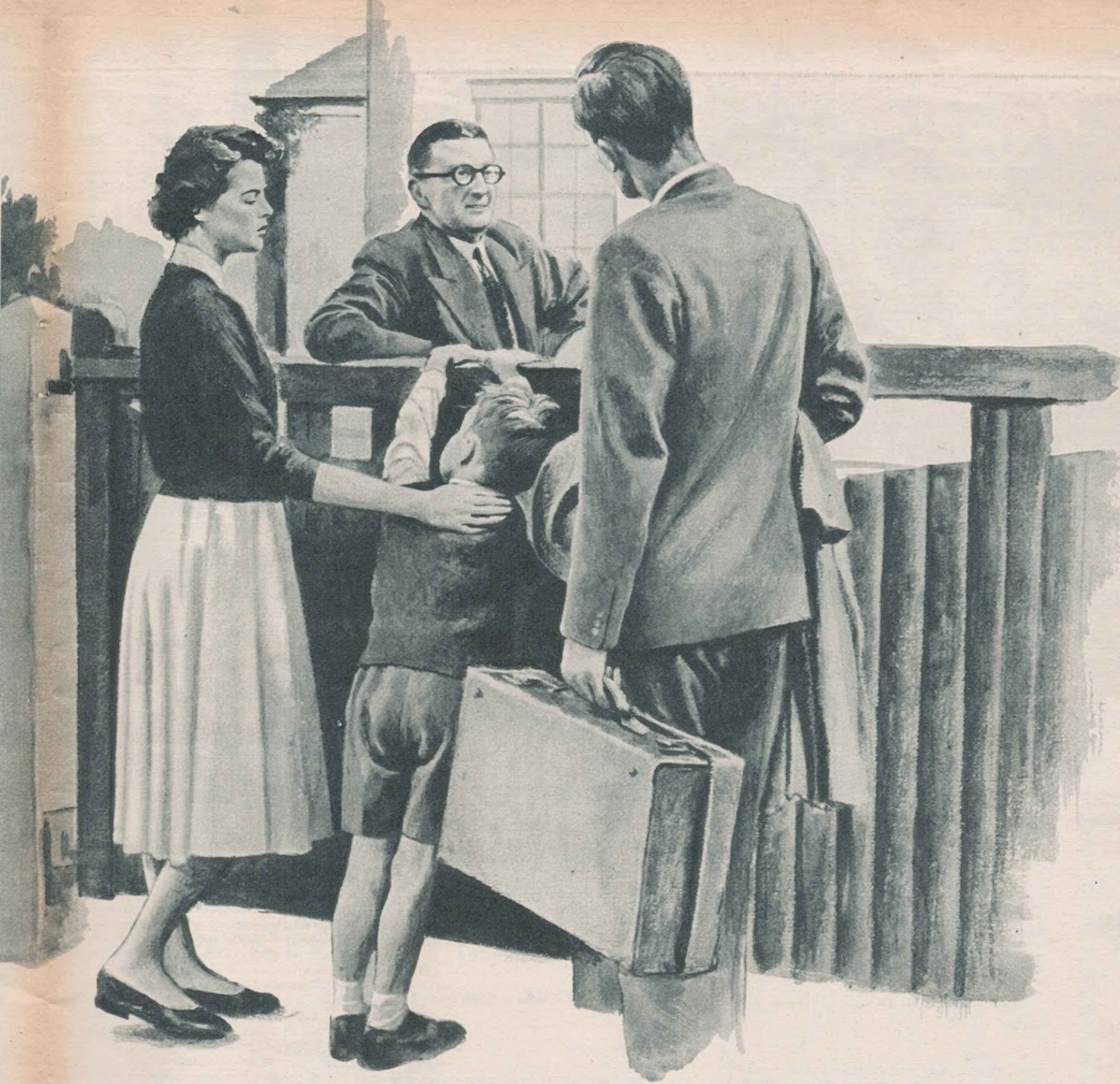
"Blast the cat!" the colonel snapped. "Ought to be shot. Never could stand the creatures."

"The trouble is, I don't know what else to give the Morvens. We're completely out of eggs."

He patted her shoulder. "Never mind, old girl. We'll think of something."

From that moment, he rose splendidly to the occasion. After making Bridget a cup of tea, he suggested opening a tin of beautiful peach-fed ham, sent them by friends in South Africa, which they had been keeping as a special treat for their wedding-anniversary lunch. . . .

The breakfast party was a strained affair at



first. The Morvens seemed shy and embarrassed. Bridget worked hard at being the charming hostess, but the colonel rather spoiled things by interrogating the young couple in a fierce, barking voice, to conceal his self-consciousness.

"What's it like, this place you're going to?"

"It's called Pear Tree Cottage," Andrea volunteered. "It's a little dream house, but an awful lot wants doing to it."

"In bad condition, eh?"

"N-no. It needs painting inside and out, but we think we can do most of the work ourselves. It's well built."

The conversation lapsed. Bridget stepped smoothly into the breach as she poured out the coffee. She said: "Did you have much difficulty in finding a house, Mr. Morven?"

"We were almost defeated," Peter answered

wryly. "The sort of cottage we had in mind seemed right beyond our means. Then an agent sent us particulars of Pear Tree Cottage, which was going cheap for a quick sale. It was a case of love at first sight, and it did seem a bargain."

"I'm so glad for you both," Bridget said. "I'm sure you are going to be very happy. And if you want any help, things sent down from town or anything like that—"

"Mm. Yes. You youngsters must feel you can count on us," the colonel said. "Hang it all, we've been neighbours long enough. Trouble is, we're such a stand-offish nation. We're all the same—never break the ice. The Continentals and Americans are always telling us that, but we won't learn. I was saying as much to Bridget only yesterday."

His wife's surprised glance matched those of

his guests, but the colonel seemed impervious to this. He was scowling at the window in which the gigantic striped cat had suddenly appeared.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed. "That brute again!"

"That's Satan, wanting some breakfast," exclaimed Mark.

"He's already had some," said Andrea. "At least, he came in about an hour ago with some evil-smelling fishy stuff all over his whiskers. I suppose he'd been rummaging in someone's dustbin again." She gave Bridget an apologetic smile. "Satan's our cat—I expect you've seen him around."

"Yes—once or twice," Bridget replied faintly.

Peter said: "I think you must be about the

Continued on page 37



Guests go ashore by launch. An adventurous spirit is often all they have in common



An instructor takes pupils sailing. For £10 a week

Plain sailing for landlubbers

by DAVID MILLWOOD

Alan Marshall gave up a well-paid job to go "messaging about in boats." Now his school brings in £10,000 a year

ONE stormy afternoon three years ago, a gaunt, sun-tanned Londoner named Alan Marshall who runs a sailing holiday business at Salcombe, Devon, spotted the blue hull and bright red sails of one of his dinghies running out of control towards dangerous rocks at the harbour mouth. Jumping into a motor launch, he headed after it.

A strong tide running against a high wind made conditions dangerous even for Marshall's sturdy launch. He watched with mounting anxiety as the two figures aboard the dinghy, whom he identified as a pair of reckless medical students, were swept closer to the rocks. Even if they escaped the rocks, they would probably be carried out to sea.

"Fortunately," says Marshall, "they capsized—they wouldn't have stood much chance of remaining afloat in the open sea. But instead of sticking to the dinghy and awaiting rescue, they abandoned her and swam ashore."

As there was a danger of the dinghy's being

smashed up, Marshall manoeuvred his launch as close as he dared and tried to make a line fast. But the heavy swell defeated him. He was swinging perilously close to the rocks and the launch was shipping water. Coming in even closer to the dinghy for a final attempt, he threw a line round the rigging. It held fast.

Drenched with spray now, Marshall jumped back to the tiller, swung the launch about and towed the dinghy back to her mooring.

"Rescuing capsized boats and their crews is not normally such a hazard," he says, "but rather a tedious matter of routine. Forty per cent of our customers have no previous experience of sailing, so we are not surprised when they run into trouble. Once we had seventeen capsize in a single day."

As manager of Blue Water Charters, a private company owned by a London company director, Marshall expects to teach four hundred landlubbers to sail this season. More people than

ever before are spending their holidays afloat—about a quarter of a million are expected to do so during 1956.

In the last few years, the popularity of sailing as a holiday pastime for the average man, as well as a sport for devotees, has soared. Seven hundred and fifty sailing clubs are registered with the Royal Yachting Association compared with 250 in 1946.

Firms which have sprung up to meet the demand are booming. "Our turnover has trebled in the last two seasons," says Marshall. "Between Easter and September last year we took £10,000."

Dinghies are the most popular craft with beginners and enthusiasts alike. A twelve-foot racing dinghy costs, new, about £150, but can be built by a handyman at home for two-thirds of that price. A number of boat-building firms sell make-it-yourself kits.

Thousands of would-be yachtsmen who cannot afford to buy a boat of their own, or who are reluctant to join a club, are booking up at sailing schools such as Marshall's, which offer instruction, food, accommodation and use of boats at an inclusive charge.

The cheapest sailing holidays of all for beginners are run by the Central Council of Physical Recreation, which this summer has eighteen courses lasting a week at Bisham Abbey on the Thames, at Hayling Island near Portsmouth, and at Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. The cost varies between £7 10s. and £10 15s.

"All the courses were booked solid months in advance," says a C.C.P.R. official. "The demand was more than double the number of bookings available."

At Salcombe, Marshall charges £10 to £15 a week. A pioneer of sailing holidays, he has a slight edge on his competitors, for he also offers accommodation afloat—in a converted Thames barge, the Violet Sibyl, or aboard Gladior II, a fifty-ton yacht. They are moored a quarter of a mile apart in Salcombe harbour. Meals are served aboard the barge and those with cabins in the yacht use a motor launch to run themselves between the two vessels or to the shore.

A spirit of adventure is often the only thing

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON



they get food, beds, lessons and use of boats

that Marshall's guests have in common. "Pukka yachtsmen like to give the impression that theirs is an exclusive sport involving expert knowledge and years of experience," he says. "That is just a myth. Anyone can learn to sail after a few hours' instruction and a few days' practice. People we have taught include film stars, teddy boys, teachers, psychiatrists, garage mechanics, airline pilots and publicans. One young couple had an Easter wedding and spent their honeymoon here in snow and sleet showers—they were the only ones game enough to sail."

Two septuagenarian sisters who specialize in adventurous holidays—shooting rapids in a canoe or touring Europe on a motor-cycle—are among Marshall's regular customers. "They learned to handle a twelve-foot dinghy with complete confidence in two days," he recalls. His fears that they might not mix with his other customers, who are aged mainly between eighteen and thirty-five, vanished on their first day. At a party aboard the barge, they joined in the fun with abandon; one sister even danced on the table.

"Age does not matter much so long as beginners are young in spirit," says Marshall. Two years ago a retired company secretary wrote: "I am a widower of sixty-three and don't know the first thing about boats. Am I too old to learn?" Marshall assured him he was not and booked him for a fortnight.

"Most people rig and sail boats by themselves on their first day but this man seemed quite hopeless. He spent the first week running aground, scraping paint off other boats, knocking his head on the boom and generally doing everything wrong. But he was determined not to be beaten. After a few more days, he began to gain confidence and to get the hang of things. By the end of his fortnight he had mastered every type of vessel."

During the season, from Easter to the end of September, Marshall employs a staff of five men and six young women who this year include two schoolteachers, a champion dinghy racer, a former hotel cook, an ex-navy officer, a commercial artist, a retired government advisor and the second coxswain of Salcombe lifeboat. Most

of them joined him for the same reason that Marshall himself gave up a well-paid job ashore—"because we agree with the water rat in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind In The Willows* that there is nothing better than 'messaging about in boats.' Whenever we advertise a vacancy, there are up to a hundred replies. Air hostesses and debutantes have offered to scrub out the galley for a few pounds a week."

Marshall, who prefers practical work, leaves most of the paper work, organization and staff supervision to his wife. As well as maintaining and repairing fourteen internal combustion engines and two generating plants, there are few jobs that he does not tackle himself, from mending sheets, pillowcases and ships' sails to acting as skipper of *Gladoris* on a sea cruise. He reconstructs the interior of boats, and once built a tender to one of the three small yachts that he hires out on charter.

The day before forty guests arrived last Whitsun, the mast of his principal instructional vessel snapped in collision with the bowsprit of a large yacht. All the local boat repair yards were closed for the weekend, but Marshall towed the boat to the shore and persuaded a retired craftsman to help him with the repair. They worked far into the night, first making a glue test, then joining the pieces of broken mast together. At nine thirty on Sunday morning, the boat was back in commission.

Within a few days, says Marshall, customers who appear shy and withdrawn on arrival let themselves go in boisterous games or lusty singing around the camp fire at a beach barbecue. During a sea cruise aboard *Gladoris* a few months ago, a normally staid civil servant alarmed his wife by shinning fifty feet up the mainmast, explaining later: "I saw one of the crew do it and suddenly wanted to have a go myself."

MARSHALL, who is fifty-three, was born at Charlton, in London, the son of a tailor's cutter. Ten years ago, while working as technical director of an aircraft and general engineering firm on the south coast, he bought a book on sailing and then a small boat which he taught himself to sail in Portsmouth harbour. Once, as he made for the harbour mouth, he saw the ferryboat approaching to port, but did not worry. There was breeze enough, and his boat seemed to be making good headway.

"In fact," he recalls, "I was hardly moving. The captain of the ferry, a chain-operated type that cannot alter course, had to pull up to avoid ramming me and wait until the tide slowly pushed me out of his way."

The experience taught Marshall a lesson that he passes on to his customers: never underestimate the strength of the tide. But when he took over Blue Water Charters, he had to learn new techniques, including one involving rapid use of the gear lever and tiller for nosing a heavy diesel motor launch up to a landing stage. At one of Salcombe's landing stages, the ferry steps, there is an additional hazard: a long concrete ramp.

The weather was rough and the tide almost out on the Saturday afternoon that Marshall, anxious to make a good impression on his first batch of departing guests and critical eyes on shore, headed the launch for the ferry steps.

But he cut the engine too soon and the launch began to swing out over the ramp. Shouting to Peggy, his raw young assistant, who was working in a publisher's office a few months before, he ordered: "Get out!"

Peggy, who is now Marshall's wife and holds a boatman's licence, obeyed him at once—and landed waist deep in water.

"Someone threw me a rope and I waded ashore, pulling the launch after me up to the steps, where I tied her up. We have since learned how to land our guests in a more dignified fashion."

THE END



Marshall gives advice on handling a racing yacht. Once he taught two sisters aged seventy



Holidaymakers live and dine afloat. Marshall leaves supervision to his wife (standing, left)



The *Violet Sibyl*, a converted Thames barge, has cabins fitted with one, two or four berths

A chieftain locks me in his harem

by CLAUDIE FAYEIN

I had ignored the warnings, defied the king, and entered the forbidden town. Now I was a prisoner

WHEN I saw Jebel Nogum, the sacred mountain which broods over Sana, capital of the Yemen, I at once decided to climb it. According to legend, all the treasure of the Imam, the King of the Yemen, is stored on the summit. It is guarded by a djin—a spirit—with a profile like a woman's on one side and like a horse's on the other.

I wrote for permission to make the ascent—and quickly got a firm refusal. Yemenites, I was told, are permitted to climb up on only one day each year; foreigners, never.

Undeterred, I set out one morning with Abdallah, my coachman. He carried a rifle to make it look as if I was making a professional call. On the lower slopes of the mountain we were halted by soldiers. I produced the letter of refusal—and I was allowed to pass amid general respect: for none of the soldiers could read and they had been overawed by the impressive seal on the letter.

The higher I climbed, the rockier and steeper the path became. But, at the summit, there was no treasure—and no djin. The castle said to have been built by Shem, the son of Noah, has vanished; and in its place is a triangular fortress. Despite the stories I had heard of a vast garrison in occupation, there was not a soul to be seen.

The view across the plain of Sana, however, compensated for my disappointment. I became anxious to get more closely acquainted with the strange, forbidding towns around the capital.

I wanted to see as much as possible of the Yemen before I returned to my home in France, where I had left my husband and four children.

During the war I had been in the maquis. My husband had been sentenced to death by the Germans, and I began the campaign to save him. He was freed just before he was to be executed. Since those days he has always understood my desire for adventure, and when I told him that I was feeling restless he gave me a year's "leave of absence."

The Yemen was seeking foreign medical specialists, and I travelled to that country early in 1951.

After some time in Sana, my chance to visit the surrounding area came sooner than I expected. The Governor of Dhamar—a shrewd, wrinkled man in a bright pink satin robe—asked the king to let me visit the sick of his city.

For some time, Abdou, my interpreter, had



Doctor Fayein fooled an armed guard to climb the Yemen's sacred mountain from which all foreigners are barred

spoken to me of Dhamar, which was his birthplace. Since a trip there would reunite him with his family, he had done all that he could to excite my curiosity. At the same time, he had boasted of my medical skill to the governor.

My friends warned me against the trip. No western doctor had ever done it before. Dhamar is on an abandoned mule track. Its fifteen thousand inhabitants are completely isolated, and said to be hostile to outsiders. Just before I set out, the male nurse I was taking as an assistant asked if I carried a revolver. When I shook my head, he looked worried. He was a sensible fellow, and his question upset me more than the warnings. But by then it was too late to withdraw.

We left Sana in a car driven by one of the governor's sons, Ahmed, who was supposed to

be a good mechanic. He insisted on bringing along several of his cronies.

We reached Dhamar in the middle of the night with a soldier crouching on the bonnet and holding my electric torch to light the way. A jolt had cracked the battery, and we expected the electrical system to go at any moment.

The sombre Hakouma—or House of Government—increased my misgivings about this trip. Strongly fortified by towers, it belonged to the Middle Ages.

The entrance was protected by a zig-zag approach, barred in places by huge tree trunks which soldiers had to lift from our path. The guard room was lit by paraffin lamps, and the vaulted stone ceiling vanished upwards into the shadows. I was surrounded by men with voluminous white robes, daggers, turbans and rifles, who fixed their painted eyes upon me.

SILENTLY, I was escorted to my room, on the third floor, above the governor's harem. It was a long, white room with rifles above the low divans round the walls. An armchair and a rattan table had been placed in the centre of the floor in my honour.

The next day, Ahmed took me on a tour of the city in his car. Then we went to the cavalry barracks, where the best horses in the Yemen are bred, and a magnificent show was staged in my honour. From the end of the yard, the horses cantered towards me in pairs. They were superb, slender and glossy beasts, much valued for their deep saddlebacks.

But Ahmed was planning a trick. At the climax of the parade, he told me casually that his car needed a complete overhaul. As a result, he said, it was necessary for me to take one of the horses for use as transport.

I asked him to select a good, even-tempered steed, whereupon his lips curled in a wicked smile. He replied that such a horse was unknown in Dhamar.

Once again, the whole stable was paraded before us, and the more spirited the horses were, the more worried I became. Ahmed carefully picked me a nervous three-year-old mare with wild eyes. In addition, I was allocated the most disagreeable soldier I have ever met—young, brutal and sneering. What with him and the horse, my stay in Dhamar turned into a gruelling experience. The mare reacted badly to the crush of people that always surrounded me in the streets, and I could not reach my patients' doors too soon. . . .

The sick sent their requests for my services to the governor, who informed Abdou of the ones he had approved. Since he only approved applications from nobles, during my first few days I did nothing but visit one great house after another. One in particular impressed me deeply.

I had understood that my patients would be in the harem, but when I arrived I was told that the master of the house was expecting me. As soon as I walked into the reception room, on the top floor, I thought that I was dreaming. Light poured through bay-windows on to divans covered with Persian rugs. Squatting on them were ten men dressed in vividly striped satin garments. The master's seat was raised above the others by an extra mattress, and he had two square cushions which served as elbow-rests.

He was a young man with very marked Semitic features, framed in a black beard. His costume was sumptuous, both his robe and turban being made of cloth of gold. At his waist hung a long, ancient dagger in a scabbard of etched silver.

He gave me not the slightest glance or gesture of welcome, nor did his companions, yet the guest's place was empty, and obviously awaited me. Facing him squatted a blind singer who stopped his song to greet me. I begged the singer to continue and he sang three poems, accompanying himself on a large tambourin



Yemenite men bathe in rain-water pools six miles from Sana to purify themselves at the Eid el Kebir—"Great Holiday"

hung with bells. All the time impassive faces glanced at me furtively, but when I finally took my leave—without having said a word to anyone but the singer, or seen a single patient—there was scarcely a nod to acknowledge my departure.

That day, I really saw the inscrutable East. Even in the twentieth century it is possible to say that there is at least one place where *The Arabian Nights* are a reality.

THE poor people of Dhamar did not seek the governor's help when they needed me. They knew that their pleas would be rejected. Instead they came to me in the street, and I soon found that I needed a surgery of some kind. The solution to my problem came unexpectedly.

I was asked to see a woman who had lost her mind when her child had been drowned in a well. I was led into a long, bare room. In a corner, near a window, a form was crouching under a sheepskin. It was the woman, who spent all her days in hiding. I stripped the cover away. She raised a face tortured with apprehension, and Abdou murmured in astonishment: "For months she has refused to look at anyone." Perhaps my unusual appearance, my khaki clothes and my blue eyes, had surprised her.

But what could I do for her? Having nothing to lose, I took her head between my hands and spoke to her for a long time in French. Since

neither she nor any of her relatives understood what I was saying, I said whatever came to my mind, without thinking. Her family were clustered behind me, hanging upon my words with silent fervour. Gradually, between my hands—and this was no illusion—her face grew calmer.

The next morning, Abdou was waiting for me in a state of tremendous excitement. "The mad-woman is better," he said. "She got up and left her room."

But continuous treatment was needed to prevent her from slipping back into her nightmare. I wanted her to accept the presence of fellow humans: but it was impossible for me to undertake a cure of psychotherapy in addition to my regular work. The only solution was to interview my patients at her house.

Her husband agreed—and so I came to hold my daily surgery in the presence of a mad-woman. She remained in her usual corner with me beside her, while one patient after another detached himself from the crowd at the back of the room and came to stretch out before me.

At first, she followed the scene with disbelief, occasionally falling prey again to her terrors and hiding under the sheepskin. At such

A bride and groom after their wedding. Child marriages are common in the Yemen: often the bride is only eleven or twelve





The governor of Kibs angrily orders citizens to clear stones from his path. He refused to go farther until every pebble had been removed

moments, I had to uncover her and speak to her until she was calm again.

Men, women and children with slight ailments and incurable diseases—all came to see me in this strange setting. But what I did, except for the madwoman, was really to no purpose. Abdou told me that hardly five patients out of twenty could pay for their prescriptions, and those five prescriptions would never be renewed.

While in Dhamar, I was determined to see the famous mosque which houses the tomb of former Imams. But, as had happened with my request to climb Jebel Nogum, a permit was refused.

One day, as I was contemplating the mosque from a neighbouring house, I suddenly became indignant at the refusal. I strode over to the mosque, removed my shoes ostentatiously before the door, and went in.

The inner building which contained the tombs was locked. It was a Friday, though, and I had certainly been told that it was open on that day. Abdou appeared behind me, standing in a spot where he did not need to be purified. Smiling bleakly, he cried out: "Don't do that, doctor! Come back!" His tone was one

which is used when calling a pet which has escaped from its cage.

I asked a priest for accurate information. Yes, it was certainly on Fridays that the tombs were opened, but only for the midday prayers. The key was not there at other times. The only thing left for me to do was to retreat and put on my shoes again.

WITH this set-back, I began to think of leaving Dhamar. And it was then that I realized that my liberty was extremely limited.

The governor informed me in an unanswerable tone that everybody was satisfied with me. He had decided to keep me in Dhamar, and had sent a telegram to obtain the king's agreement.

I was thunderstruck. I had left my house, my friends and my horse in Sana—I would lose them all.

I had to escape. A plea for help sent through the post would have been useless. A letter which I had written two months previously had not been delivered.

As it happened, the windows of the Hakouma opened on the city square. At lunchtime one day I saw a lorry pull up. The driver stepped

down—and it was Salah, who had driven me from Taiz to Sana when I first arrived in the Yemen. I hailed him energetically. He heard me, and when I left for my afternoon visits he was waiting in the front row of the crowd.

I managed to slip him a letter without anybody noticing, and he drove off at once. That same evening he was in Sana, and gave the letter to my friend the queen.

Two days later the governor again sent for me. As I had hoped, he told me that the queen was ailing, and had asked for me to see her as quickly as possible. The king had recalled me to Sana at her request. . . .

The next trip I wanted to make was to Manaha, a city famed for its beauty, in the heart of some distant mountains. The road there is barred to foreigners, and controlled by brigands. A German explorer went to Manaha in 1936, and was thrown into prison. Since then, no European had succeeded in obtaining the king's permission for the journey. The poor state of the road provides an excellent excuse for refusals.

Nevertheless, when I heard that the governor of Maefak, a city near Manaha, was ill, I got the king's authorization to visit him. The permit was for Maefak only, and I caught the director of the hospital giving Abdou strict warning not to let me go any farther.

Experience had already taught me that in the Yemen one can go almost anywhere provided an armed soldier is in attendance. I decided to take Hafez Allah, who was my guard at that time. He was a rather ugly fellow with the tiny face of a thin simple child and had just been released from prison after murdering two men.

Instead of a turban, he covered his crinkly hair with a dark blue handkerchief knotted at the corners. He had neither shoes nor shirt, but while in my service he gradually added to his equipment a white scarf which he could spread on the ground for his prayers, a new knife, a woman's black and white checked jacket with a velvet collar, and a pair of sandals.

For Abdou, I hired a little mule which could also carry a canvas bag of medicines and provisions.

I decided to ride my horse, El Hajab, and we took to the road on a beautiful cool morning. . . .

The next day the landscape of grey rocks around us became progressively more chaotic

Prince Hassan. At the Temple of the Moon-God he seized a dangerous snake in his bare hands



Blue Bedouins meet the plane which took Doctor Fayein to Marib. These Arabs get their name from their skin—which has absorbed dye from the brilliant indigo-coloured clothes they wear





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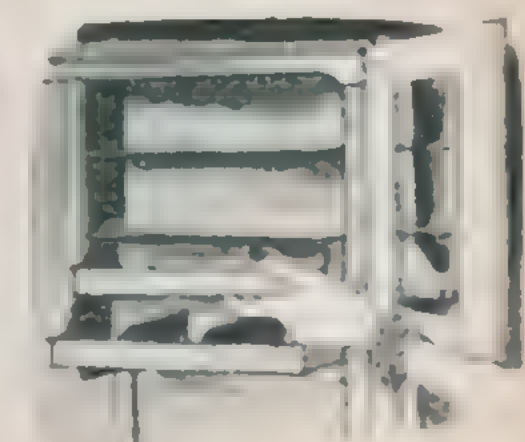
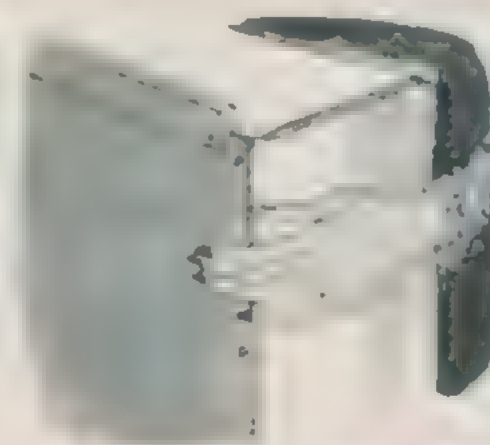
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The Queen of Sheba's chief city is believed to have been near Marib, where these Arabs live

A soldier of the Imam guards the ruins of the Temple of the Moon-God, thousands of years old



and rugged. At one point, we came out above a very deep valley, and our road was cut into an almost vertical cliff. From top to bottom, the full three thousand feet of the opposite cliff was covered with narrow terraces under heavy cultivation.

Our speed slackened because our animals were having a difficult time. It was then that a man, walking rapidly and carrying a large leather sack, caught up with us. He was a postman taking letters to Maefak, and he had some mail for me which had been forwarded from Sana.

That afternoon I had to make a decision about my horse. The governor of Maefak had sent me two mules because the rest of the journey was difficult for a horse used to the plains, but I was afraid that if I left the horse behind I would find no means in Maefak of making a dash for Manaha. Accordingly, I ordered Hafez Allah to follow us, leading the unloaded El Hajab by the bridle.

Maefak is at the bottom of a deep valley and it took us two hours to descend the three thousand feet. The city stands at the foot of a six-hundred-foot cliff, on the summit of which is the Hakouma, where we were to be lodged. We climbed the cliff by means of steps less than a yard wide, paved with huge, rough-hewn blocks of stone. There were bends so sharp that at times my mule had me hanging out in space. The half-hour climb seemed endless. Then suddenly some wooden doors, left ajar, appeared before us, and my escort passed through, giving thanks to God.

The governor, Sayed Mohammed El Ajoua, was a robust man of sixty with a round face and a short grey beard. He felt much better just with having a doctor at hand. His wife, his nieces, his five sons, his servants, and his soldiers of the guard were nevertheless eager to see me, and I was kept busy the following morning.

I had the honour of lunching with him, and decided that the moment had come to broach serious matters. I asked for mules for a trip to Manaha. With an impenetrable expression he said that I would have his reply that evening.

At dinner, the governor announced the decision which I feared. He said very simply that

his mule was sick and no longer available. I tried to justify a trip to Manaha by saying that I wanted to send a telegram from there, but the moment I mentioned the name, he turned completely deaf.

I reflected that my horse El Hajab had proved his ability as a mountain climber. We would go on by ourselves.

I awoke anxiously the next morning. The governor stayed out of sight, and, while we prepared for the journey, Abdou avoided my gaze. El Hajab, fully loaded, descended the cliff path with difficulty, and Maefak began to fade into the distance behind us.

It would have been quite in accord with local custom if, without letting me know in advance, guards had been posted to intercept us. I turned over in my mind what I would do in such circumstances. Should I just give in meekly? Should I try to bribe them? Should I send Hafez Allah into the fray (surely not!), or should I return to Maefak and have it out with the governor?

WE met nobody and when we reached the great plain of Manaha, ten thousand feet high, and could see the white houses clustered between two mountains, Abdou and I exchanged a long, triumphant look.

Peasants outside the city stopped and fell into step with me. I do not know which astonished them more; to see a horse, or a woman riding it. At Abdou's request, they guided us to the best inn.

As soon as the upper room, a comfortable one with clean rugs and cushions, had been opened for me, I sent Abdou to the Hakouma. He returned almost at once. The governor was waiting for me.

As I crossed the city, I was surrounded by inquisitive eyes. The Hakouma had a sinister air. There was a narrow zig-zag entry, then a dark stairway, and, on a landing, the governor himself.

He was a tall, severe-looking old man with a thin beard. He looked at me piercingly, and, without any greeting whatever, opened a door and pushed me into a darkened room. I saw



Sculptures found at the temple. The Imam once made an American stop excavation work

him dragging Abdou into a room opposite. Then the door closed upon me.

I was in a harem!

A gentle, elderly woman, the mistress of the house, tried to comfort me, but I was speechless with fear and anger. All my knowledge of Arabic fled, and she ended by limiting her conversation to a few little exclamations.

After half-an-hour of waiting and worrying, I heard a knock at the door and a voice calling me. It was Abdou, bewildered but radiant. He pulled me outside, and told me what had happened.

With his flair for handling tricky situations, he had chosen the best course. He had gone on his knees at the governor's feet and confessed that we had no right to be in Manaha. The governor had replied that he liked honesty—and would welcome me fittingly.

Dazzled by our victory, Abdou and I returned to our inn, this time looking confidently at the city and its inhabitants.

Manaha deserves its reputation for beauty. It is an open city on a narrow, rocky ridge which joins two mountains and forms a very high

Continued on page 45



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Here's to beer! Good health, everyone!

A TOUCH OF BLACKMAIL

by WILLIAM BRANDON



To Monsieur le Duc, business was business. And the love note helped

SINCE I thought of my old friend Monsieur le Duc as a fixture of Cannes, where he regularly pursues his regrettably shifty operations as an antique dealer, it was a considerable surprise to see him in Paris. And still more of a surprise to see him driving a truck.

It was a little narrow-shouldered vehicle of the kind called *camionette*, meaning truckette, loaded with a swaying tangle of old furniture lashed more or less in place with ropes. It tottered along uttering piteous mechanical cries and presently died in convulsions, tying up traffic from the place Vendôme to the rue de Rivoli.

It was then that I saw Monsieur le Duc, complete to Homburg, stick and gloves, climb out and poke vaguely about under the bonnet. After I had got over my astonishment, I went and greeted him.

"What a happy chance you have appeared, mon vieux," Monsieur le Duc said, shaking hands. "You understand these matters."

I asked him if he was moving to Paris.

"Nothing so serious. These are the furnishings

"You become a man of mystery, monsieur," said the girl. "You shall ride with me and explain"

ILLUSTRATED BY TANAT JONES

of the château of my old friend, the General Huvelin, who has asked me to see to their sale."

The load of junk on the truckette wouldn't have furnished a medium-sized hut. I suggested it must be a rather small château.

"These are the only pieces I was allowed to take," Monsieur le Duc said bitterly. "Papa Huvelin had previously entailed the château to his daughter, so he couldn't sell the house itself, and now her agents there inform me the law holds the furnishings are also inalienable and can't be sold. I was only permitted to remove these few pieces you see, which were acknowledged to be Papa Huvelin's personal property, and except for an antique desk from the library they are of no value. It is distressing, and shakes one's belief in good children, for his daughter is exceedingly rich."

He was interrupted by an agent of police recommending his attention to the traffic jam. Monsieur le Duc extended his apologies and went for help to the limousine pinned behind the stalled truckette.

He ignored the limousine's chauffeur, except to slip him a folded banknote as he passed, and lifted his hat to the single passenger, a lady. She put down the window beside her and it could be perceived that she was young, very blonde, and very beautiful.

Monsieur le Duc, his voice quivering with a sincere appreciation of these factors, said with a bow: "I am truly desolated, madame."

"That's all very well, monsieur, but I—I have an appointment with my hairdresser, who is temperamental, and now I'm late."

"That I should inconvenience for even a moment so charming a young person maddens me with chagrin," Monsieur le Duc stated with great earnestness. "But fate, alas, has thrown me on your mercy. May I beg you to give my truckette a push as far as the Ritz?"

She said in delight: "But I must, if only to learn why you are going to the Ritz in such a sad little truckette. You become a man of mystery, monsieur, and I—I find mysteries ravishing. You shall ride with me and explain."

She opened the car door and Monsieur le Duc, after blandly asking me to do him the immense favour of steering the truckette, got in.

Quite a crowd of chauffeurs, caped traffic policemen, flower-sellers, and people walking dogs had gathered around the truckette. They cheered when we drove off. The truckette's ignition key, I noticed, was missing.

We entered the place Vendôme, circled the column, and drew up before the Ritz. The limousine, with Monsieur le Duc and the blonde still in it, then suddenly swept past the truckette and vanished.

SHORTLY after lunch Monsieur le Duc appeared on the terrace of the café in the rue Royale where I was having coffee. He apologized for leaving me with the truckette and assured me that I could not but cheer his action once I heard the circumstances.

I had considerable doubt about that, since Monsieur le Duc's actions were seldom cheerable.

"Tiens, tiens," Monsieur le Duc said airily. "You shall hear. It was a most remarkable coincidence, but the young lady was none other than Madame Dany Perret, the daughter of the General Huvelin."

I was duly amazed. I said: "You wouldn't have helped the coincidence along by bribing her chauffeur to have her car behind your truckette when it stalled?"

"It did seem best to meet her casually, since one can never be sure of one's reception in a delicate affair of this sort. In any case, I have now been appealing to her better nature in this painful matter of her father's difficulties. We went to the office of her lawyer to discuss it. Admit it is a worthy endeavour."

I was duly touched.

"You remain sceptical," Monsieur le Duc said, sorrowfully. "But the General Huvelin was a

A scientist's fantastic search for the sea's most astounding prize

OLD FOURLEGS

A FEW months before the war, a South African professor made an announcement which startled scientists all over the world. He claimed to have found a fish that everyone believed had been extinct for seventy million years.

The professor is J. L. B. Smith. The fish was a coelacanth, a strange creature with fins like limbs, which gave biologists a sudden glimpse at life as it was before the evolution of man, aeons before Adam.



Dr. J. L. B. Smith

The fish that Smith identified was incomplete—only its head and skin remained. But the discovery, the most sensational biological find of all time, fired him with a relentless obsession that has dominated his life—to capture another coelacanth.

For fourteen years, Smith hunted the unknown seas of eastern Africa . . . befriending strange tribes, braving man-eating lions, risking death in cockleshell craft. Then, suddenly, another coelacanth was caught—on a remote island hundreds of miles away, with a hot-house temperature and no refrigeration.

Smith's story of his search, his terrible frustration on the verge of success, and his eventual triumph, makes a real-life thriller that has already been acclaimed by the critics:

HAMMOND INNES (*Evening Standard*): "It is one of the most exciting books of discovery that have come my way."

CYRIL CONNOLLY (*Sunday Times*): "This is a book of exceptional interest . . . a fascinating book."

NANCY SPAIN (*Daily Express*): "The unforgettable picture of a marvellous man, restless as a humming bird, enthusiastic as a child, determined as a terrier. . . ."

SIR GAVIN DE BEER (*Observer*): "A very human document in which the central figure is not the coelacanth."

Professor Smith's exciting story, fully illustrated by historic photographs, begins. . . .

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

friend of my youth to whom I am firmly indebted."

I was duly affected.

"He is a man of open heart, generous impulses, and a trusting simplicity. His daughter, the young Dany, is an exquisite creature, as perhaps you saw, and life has lavished gifts upon her, but she is inclined to be a trifle thoughtless, as happy people often are.

"Her father settled a very large sum of money on her so she would be able to marry well, which she did. Her husband is Jean Perret, who drives racing cars and climbs high mountains and is worth millions. Unfortunately, Papa Huvelin dispensed so much of his wealth on his daughter Dany that by the time he got her safely married he didn't have anything left for himself. Ah, money, so slow to congeal, so quick to melt!"

Monsieur le Duc dreamed a moment and sighed.

"But he was not particularly disturbed, because he is of a carefree nature, and he can always support himself by playing bridge. However, an emergency arose. He fell in love with his cook, a woman of great charm and, as a cook, an artist of electrifying talent. He asked his daughter for enough money to marry the cook, whose name is Eleonora, and establish a restaurant, where they could live happily ever after. His daughter, I regret to say, refused."

I asked if this was on the advice of her multimillionaire husband.

"No, her husband is at the moment in South America winning a fencing championship and is not involved. It was her own idea. Most children feel it a duty to oppose any plans their parents make, due to a secret belief all children have that their parents are not quite right mentally. It's usually a difficult point of view to change because it's usually well founded, but it causes much unhappiness. Nevertheless, I think I may have succeeded in mellowing Dany to the point of a reasonable agreement with her father."

I WAS curious as to how her mellowing had been managed, and Monsieur le Duc hastened to explain.

"Why, I found some forgotten letters in that antique desk," he said. "One of them was a love letter to Dany from an ardent admirer. I mentioned it to her and she had the thought that such a letter might dismay her husband if he should happen to see it and attach a recent interpretation to it, which would be easy to do as the letter is undated. Of course, no one wishes to see Monsieur Perret dismayed, for he is, as I have indicated, somewhat impetuous."

"So you offered to sell her the letter," I suggested.

"Not at all. I offered to sell her the desk, although it's true that the desk still contains the letter. In payment for it she will turn over to her father a suitable sum of money. Her lawyer is drawing up the necessary papers now, and we are to meet at tea to conclude the transaction.

"I'd be glad if you could join us. A witness is useful in these things. I should warn you that I haven't bored the General Huvelin with the whole story, and he supposes I have persuaded Dany by oratory and exhortation."

It was quite in character that Monsieur le Duc should have carried his point by blackmail, but I was bothered by one thing lacking. It was not like Monsieur le Duc to forget his own profit. I said: "No doubt the General Huvelin is cutting you in for a percentage of whatever you can squeeze from his daughter?"

"Not a franc!" Monsieur le Duc said, chin up nobly as he finished his glass.

The tea-party was to take place at an aggressively de luxe café in the avenue Matignon. Monsieur le Duc drove up in his truckette, which seemed to run all right—or at any rate, ran—with the addition of the ignition key.

Dany arrived as we entered. Dressed by Mad Carpentier, hatted by Le Monnier, umbrella'd by

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At Windscale plutonium factory atomic material is handled through the glovebox. Safety precautions are stringent

OPPORTUNITY UNLIMITED • 3

The future beckons the 'atom babes'

by HARRY HOPKINS

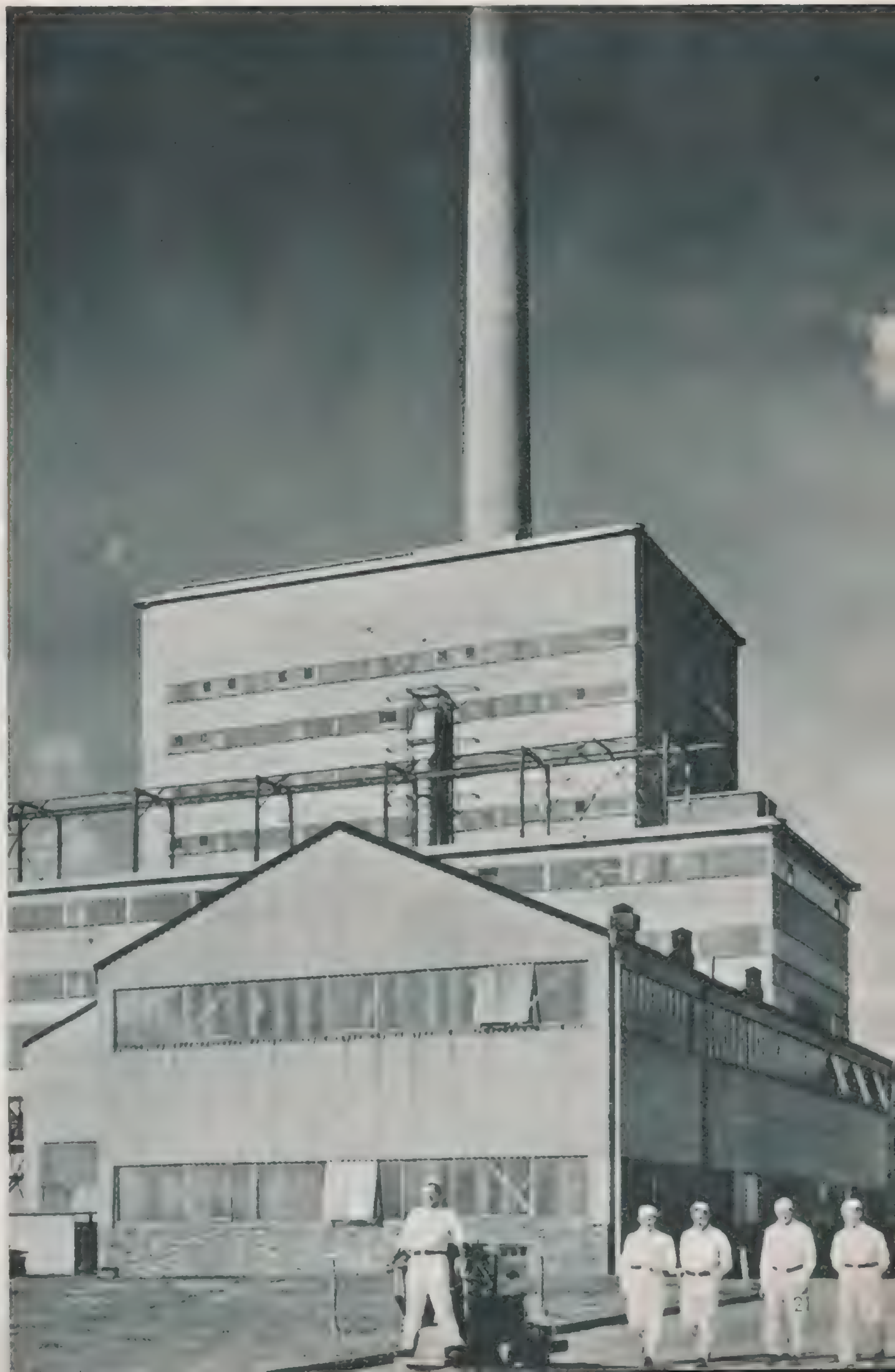
Girls as well as boys are taking part in the greatest industrial adventure of the age

IN the white bank of counters, the clustering red eyes winked on and off. The hands of the dials flickered. A small fair-haired girl in a white overall, with a film-badge on her lapel and Atomic Energy Authority shoes on her feet—for this was a "hot" laboratory—watched the panels carefully, noting down figures on a stack of tabulated sheets.

Her name was Margaret Johnson. She was twenty-one years old, a farmer's daughter from Cleator Moor on the edge of the great Cumberland hills. She was just one of the hundreds of young people for whom the coming of the Windscale Atomic Factory—and now Calder Hall—to this remote and once desolate coast had created a new world of undreamed-of opportunity.

Margaret Johnson is an "A.Sc."—a "scientific assistant." A.Sc. is the lowest rung of the laboratory ladder on to which she stepped when she left Whitehaven Grammar School with the G.C.E. (including the necessary science subjects and maths). For the first five weeks, like other new A.Sc.s, she had worked in a special training laboratory, learning the

The atomic factory workers in their white suits are offered undreamed-of opportunities. And for girls there is equal pay





Only ten years after Britain's atomic pioneers began, their techniques are being taught to students as matters of routine



Apprentices at Springfields learn new standards. Graphite, used in atom piles, must be cut to thousandths of an inch with special tools

rudimentary routines of this strange world of long, low buildings and lawns that spread beneath the great white cubes of the Windscale piles.

How to handle weak "alpha"-emitting substances inside glass-walled "glove-boxes," with one's fingers thrust into the gloves which are drawn into the box by a partial vacuum inside. . . . How to use "micro-methods," working with quantities very much more minute than in most laboratory work. . . . How to dilute highly active samples, working from behind protective screening by remote control. . . .

Then, slowly, with the other new boys and girls, she had begun to move around the Windscale laboratories—among the largest and best equipped in the world—doing the various jobs. "It's very different from working isolated in some small lab.," says H. J. Woodman, chief chemist, head of Windscale's analytical services. "Young people here have the opportunity of seeing and hearing all sorts of work going on around them. There's plenty of stimulus—and we encourage them to ask questions."

FOR some time now, Margaret Johnson had been settled in the counting department, a section of the analytical services building, a maze of white corridors leading to nearly fifty separate laboratories and covering two and a half acres. The flashing panels she was watching were registering radiation from "granular substances"—sand from the beaches and soil from the country round about, gathered by the ever-vigilant Health Physics Department, whose function it is to keep a constant check on radiation hazards over a wide area.

With their incessant specimens of dust, air, roots and vegetation—and sea water, mussels, fish and sand from the sea bed dredged up by the patrolling motor fishing vessel, Mary Munro III—the health physics people are large customers of the counting section. But counting has a key place in analysing and controlling the many complex processes centring around the piles. For Margaret Johnson there were many sorts of counters to be learned, intricate and delicate mechanisms designed to measure many types and levels of activity in liquids, solids and gases.

Windscale is a plutonium factory. In its two

piles, which are monumental cubes of graphite laced with uranium "cartridges," the neutrons caused by a splitting of the fissile uranium 235 bombard the non-fissile uranium 238—both occurring in nature—to produce plutonium. These days it not only supplies the explosive of the atom bombs but, more hopefully, goes to build up the store of fuel for the nuclear power stations now planned to bridge the dangerous gap yawning between Britain's expanding industrial needs and her sluggish coal output.

Between the two great white concrete blocks of the piles and those strange, silent, smokeless stacks that now dominate the West Cumberland skyline, soars the high glass-windowed slab of



The Windscale laboratories are among the best in the world. Students tackle all kinds of jobs to gain experience

the separation and purification plant—the heart of Windscale's many-sided activities. Here the irradiated slugs from the pile are dissolved in nitric acid and from every ton of slugs is recovered a few ounces of plutonium, nineteen hundredweights of slightly depleted uranium 235 and a large range of often highly radioactive "fission products."

The controlling of this long series of intricate operations and the appropriate disposal of the results is the central task around which, at greater or lesser distance, the labours of Windscale's three thousand workers revolve. In another small "active" laboratory, off another of the endless corridors of the analytical services building, I found another young A.Sc., Allan Wolstencroft, working at a fume-cupboard, his rubber-gloved hands within the glass front panel, preparing over a bunsen flame a minute specimen of plutonium solution, coated on to a tiny circle of glass ready for analysis by the counters. Any free radioactive particles were sucked from the cupboard into the laboratory ventilating system, which is fitted with elaborate devices to remove them before the cleansed air is blown out of the high stack.

Like most of his young colleagues, Allan Wolstencroft is the first member of his family to embrace a scientific career. He came down to Windscale from Carlisle, where his father has a job with British Railways.

It was Friday, and so, when work stops at 5.10 p.m., after changing shoes and clothes, washing up, and moving from the "dirty" to the "clean" side of the building, Allan Wolstencroft would snatch a twenty-minute tea in the canteen before making a dash for the factory bus. This would carry him to his evening classes at the fine new technical college which the atomic energy industry has brought to the rather grim old mining town of Whitehaven.

In the one-day-a-week release given by the Atomic Energy Authority, and on one or two evenings of his own time, Allan Wolstencroft is studying general chemistry for the Higher National Certificate which will set his feet on the next rung of the ladder, as assistant experimental officer (with pay rising to £1,220 a year). Again, given the will to climb it, this ladder can lead to the top.

For women, too—as befits this brand-new

mid-century industry—there is equal pay and opportunity. At Windscale, eleven per cent of the scientific workers joining from school are girls. They have proved their worth and today the idea of women workers and executives in atomic plants is fully accepted. But it was not always so; at first they were greeted in some quarters with incredulity and even disapproval.

"They used to call us 'the Atom Babes,'" said Mrs. Dutton, a Liverpool girl who eight years ago joined the training course at the A.E.A.'s uranium ore processing plant at Springfields, near Preston, soon after its opening. Now, both literally and metaphorically, she has found her niche—in a tiny room in the Windscale analytical services block where she works with a microphotometer analysing spectrograms, the photographic plates crossed by lines of varying thicknesses which are the "portraits" of the chemical composition of substances "snapped" in spectrographs.

I asked her how she had come to embark on this adventure.

She laughed. "The careers mistress at school just gave me a bit of paper. It had 'Atomic Energy, Springfields,' written on it. So I went there."

Had she regretted the journey?

She laughed again. "No—I've been very satisfied. In fact, I not only found an interesting career, but I met my husband, too. So, altogether, it turned out very well for me."

Now Irene Dutton and her husband, a Windscale chemist, have a house in Eskdale, the beautiful valley that winds up into the mountains from the Cumberland coast. For the unmarried A.Sc.s. there is a modern hostel, with various clubs, its own cinema (three changes weekly) and a dance every Saturday evening. In summer, the beach is handy—and behind lies the magnificent country of the Lake District.

For new recruits from school to the science side, there are in Britain's industrial atomic energy establishments two main avenues of entry: they may, like Margaret Johnson, Allan Wolstencroft or Mrs. Dutton, join the chemical analytical department—or they may start with the research and development laboratories.

WORK in "R. and D." is perhaps somewhat more unpredictable and adventurous. I talked to several young "R. and D." A.Sc.s. There was Maureen Booth from Blackpool—forty-five miles away across Morecambe Bay as the crow flies, five hours by train. After eight months at Windscale she was working in the purification plant, helping, among other things, to separate from the numerous other "fission products" radio-active caesium, which is now to be used in the treatment of cancer.

Another Blackpudlian, David Wolfenden, was in a section engaged on the examination of the irradiated uranium cartridges when, in lead coffins and through a protective water channel, they emerge from the piles. Using screening and remote control handling, the slugs are cut into pieces, examined under microscopes, metallurgically tested, and photographed by X-ray.

Looking from their laboratory windows, the young A.Sc.s. can see a stone's throw away across the River Calder, still part enclosed in scaffolding, the new buildings and twin piles of Calder Hall, the world's first large-scale atomic power station. In October, the Queen will press the button officially switching Britain's first atom power into the National Grid.

The second "B" reactor is due to be completed in 1958. And, northwards, across the Solway Firth, in Dumfriesshire, the construction of another £30 million atomic power station, which will add a further two hundred megawatts to the Grid, is getting under way.

In the next ten years, the Central Electricity Authority now plans to build a further fifteen atomic power stations up and down Britain at a cost of £400 million.

By 1975, it is estimated that forty per cent of



In its fine new building, Birmingham technical college welcomes students for the atomic age. But it desperately needs teachers—and some schools still think of a technical career as a last resort

Britain's power needs will be met by atomic reactors. Yet it is only just ten years since Sir Christopher Hinton was given twelve assistants and a number of empty offices and told to go ahead and create an atomic energy production division.

Never in all our long history as an engineering nation has a new industry grown with such astonishing speed and sureness. The hundreds of new techniques which Hinton and his pioneer assistants perfected, often working on totally unprecedented problems, are now daily routines, standard practice being taught to recruits from schools, technical colleges and universities at the training schools attached to every A.E.A. establishment.

There are schools at Windscale and Springfields, at Capenhurst in Cheshire where uranium 235 is separated from uranium 238 by gaseous diffusion; at Dounreay up on Scotland's roof, a development centre for fast "breeder" reactors; at the metallurgical laboratories near Warrington—and at Harwell itself.

Somewhere or other, the atomic energy industry needs almost every sort of technical skill and knowledge. But there are two broad career ladders for new entrants: the laboratory ladder and the workshop ladder. For in this industry science and engineering work all the time in double harness. Sir John Cockcroft, creator of Harwell, is a physicist; Sir Christopher Hinton, builder of the industrial atomic energy system, is an engineer who started out as a Great Western Railway apprentice.

I found John Weir in the training workshop at Windscale. A sixteen-year-old apprentice from Egremont, he was just taking over the workshop stores room, a responsibility each apprentice takes on for a period of his training.

"I've been looking forward to getting into

Windscale for the past three years," he told me, happily.

"Oh, why?"

"Security!" he replied without hesitation.

In Cumberland, an atomic energy job, it seems, is these days felt to confer the same sort of prestige and permanence as once belonged to a place behind a bank's counter.

For the most part an apprentice's training at Windscale is much the same as elsewhere, though beyond the first year somewhat wider in its sweep, including such subjects as "pipework" and "acids and alkalis" from the safety angle, the mechanism of the great blowers which drive air through the Windscale piles and remove radioactive particles, and "steam and water," filling in the background for atomic power station work.

Most of all it is necessary to instil the ever-present need to remain always alert against the invisible peril, the killer who gives no warning of approach to eyes, ears, nose, throat or sense of touch.

"That's one thing they really *do* drill into you," said Ronald Rumney, an electrical apprentice in his fifth and final year who, when he spoke to me, had just come from working on power lines around the pile.

Before he leaves the training workshop where he spends his first year, each apprentice gets a series of demonstrations and lectures on radiation and decontamination. In his third year, he spends two and a half days going around checking up with health physics staff.

Routine precautions are tightly controlled. Rumney was wearing a jersey with "Atomic Energy Authority" across the front. Like others in active areas, he had to change his clothes on arriving and leaving, monitoring hands

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Shadow of the moon

by M. M. KAYE

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

The river was their only chance. Unless they dared to cross it they would burn to death

THE Indian Mutiny was at its height. But not all the Europeans had been killed—yet. A few beleaguered garrisons still held out; a few scattered survivors were still hiding, in daily terror of discovery.

In the *Hirren Minar*, an ancient hunting lodge in the depths of the jungle, were three who had escaped the Lunjore massacre—Lou Cottar, Winter de Ballesteros and Captain Alex Randall. Lottie English, who had fled with them, had since died in childbirth, but her baby daughter, Amanda, was thriving: on goat's milk.

It was a perilous existence for them all—yet Winter was happy. She was in love with Alex Randall. Her marriage to the Commissioner of Lunjore, Conway Barton, had been a mockery. He had married her only to gain possession of the de Ballesteros's Indian estates.

Within a few days of the wedding, Winter knew that it was Alex she loved. . . . And now she was a widow—free to love him, free to marry him if he asked her. For Winter these weeks in the jungle were the happiest of her life; she was happier, even, than she had been as a child in the *Gulab Mahal*, the Lucknow palace where her cousin, Ameera, still lived.

Lou Cottar, too, was content. Her time was spent in caring for the baby that she had come to look on as her own. She did not mind how long they stayed at the *Hirren Minar*. She was afraid of moving from it. They were safe here and they must not take any risks.

She did not know that their days at the *Hirren Minar* were nearly over. . . .

PART FIVE

Fire Sweeps The Jungle

ALEX was setting a snare at the entrance to a small clearing some fifty yards from the *Hirren Minar* when he smelled smoke. He had not been feeling well that day. His head ached, and he thought angrily that Lou or Winter had disobeyed orders and lit an early fire. Then he realized that the hot wind that was rustling the dry grass and dead leaves was blowing towards the *Hirren Minar*, and not away from it.

He left the snare and returned swiftly to the two women. "Pull up the ladder and keep a revolver handy," he told them peremptorily. "And drag the slab over that hole. I'm going to have a look round."

He disappeared and they waited a long time, listening in silence to the interminable croon

of the hot wind and the monotonous rustle and clank of the dry bamboos.

Alex returned half an hour later, looking strained and uneasy. The smoke was coming strongly on the wind, and not only smoke but drifting ash. Soon there would be sparks, and the forest was tinder-dry from the scorching June days.

The two women faced Alex, their eyes wide and fearful but without panic, and he knew that the anxiety in Lou's was not for herself, but only for the child she held.

He found that his voice was a little difficult to control and said with unnecessary curtness: "Can either of you swim?"

"Yes," said Winter.

"A little," said Lou Cottar. "But—but Amanda—"

Alex said: "We'll have to make some sort of raft. Just in case. Get me all the ropes you can, Lou, and give that child some food." He disappeared down the ladder and they heard him hacking down the heavy bamboo door that he had built to protect the goat.

The air was full of smoke now, and they could hear the crackle of the flames. The world about the *Hirren Minar* was as bright as though it were bathed in a red sunset.

Alex called up: "Bring anything that isn't too heavy and that you think is worth bringing. I can manage the door, it doesn't weigh so much. We may have half an hour or so yet, but it isn't safe to bet on it. Be as quick as you can."

He departed with the door, and the women collected all the food they could carry. They could not have found their way to the river by night, familiar as it had become, but this was not night. This was daylight, and hotter than any day they had ever known. The fire was no longer a distant, crackling chorus, but a steady roar, and the sky was a brilliant rose-pink pall of smoke shot through with sparks.

Alex was waiting for them on the little shelving strip of bank where they had bathed so often. The makeshift raft floated high and light in the water, and he lashed the tin box that Lou had been using as a cradle for the baby to the centre of it. He took the baby from her and laid it in the box among an assortment of bundles.

It was less easy to get the goat on board and safely tethered. But they managed it.

Alex found that he had to shout to make himself heard above the roar of the fire, and



Alex winced as a spark fell on his chest. Winter lay still, but Lou Cottar was on her knees beside the raft, gasping for breath





One of the men kicked Alex. "Let be!" Winter cried. "Cannot you see he is sick?"

that he felt oddly stupid and lightheaded. He would have liked to sit down in the water and stay where he was. Instead, he pulled himself together with an effort and called: "I've rigged up a sort of tow-rope and I'll go ahead with it. If you're not much of a swimmer, Lou, keep hold of the raft and keep upstream of it. Winter, you push from behind. Give me as much help as you can; and don't, for God's sake, let go."

He had made a rough-and-ready harness of rope, and with it across his shoulders he struck out from the bank. He felt the current catch him and draw him and the raft downstream, as a shower of sparks fell hissing into the river.

He did not glance back but swam on steadily, striving with everything in him to keep from being drawn too far down the stream.

The oil-smooth surface of the water was filmed with ash and charred leaves. The river was full of frantic, swimming animals, many of whom clawed at the raft and held on to it, dragging sodden, shivering little bodies on to the sheltering bamboos. There were squirrels, rats, mice and a bedraggled mongoose. And pig and deer—sambur, chital, blackbuck—nilghai, jackals, panthers, tigers, a scaly four-footed iguana and a solitary elephant with a broken tusk were all swimming as desperately as the three humans.

It seemed to Alex as though they would never reach the shallows. His head ached and his muscles seemed to have no strength in them, and there was a cramping pain in his stomach. The rope bit into his shoulders and caught his throat, choking him, and he could feel the remorseless drag of the current.

Then, quite suddenly, there were sandbanks

ahead, as though they had lifted from the river, and the current no longer pulled at him.

He freed himself from the rope harness and dragged the makeshift raft forward until it grounded and they tumbled ashore. He turned then at last, and saw that they were all there; the shivering goat, the baby lying placidly in its box, Lou Cottar on her knees, staring blindly ahead of her and breathing in deep gasps; and Winter, lying full length close to the raft.

The bank that they had left was a wall of flame. A hot spark fell on Alex's bare chest, and he winced and swung round suddenly to look at the line of trees behind them, beyond the long stretch of the sand.

Lou Cottar, following his look, said with a catch in her voice: "It can't reach as far as this."

THE flames could not leap that wide expanse of river. But the wind was carrying stray sparks across it, and the jungle everywhere was tinder-dry. Alex bent without a word and untied the box from which Lou had removed the baby, and filled it with the various things that they had brought with them, while Winter readjusted the wet folds of her sari and, dragging the goat, followed them across the wide level of the sands to the shelter of the grass and the casuarina scrub that fringed it.

The long swim across the river had cooled them, but now they were hot again. Unbelievably hot. The air scorched their lungs with each breath they drew, and the river, the wide sandbanks and the line of the jungle were lit with a bright, pulsating glare as though it were a stage in the full blaze of footlights and gas lamps. Here and there a floating spark alighted

and went out, or caught at a brittle, powder-dry spear of grass.

A tuft of pampas grass twenty yards from them caught alight and flared up, and Lou caught her breath in a harsh gasp. Snatching at the end of Winter's wet sari, she dragged the end of it free and drew it across the child's face. She said desperately: "It's almost dry already. We shall have to get back to the water. . . ."

Winter saw Alex's face stiffen queerly. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, he gave a dry sob of relief, and, holding out his hand palm upwards, said: "Rain!"

It was the monsoon at last.

Unbelievably, incredulously, they turned their faces up to the furnace of the sky, the hot drifting ash and the falling sparks, and felt something warm and wet splashing upon their parched skins.

"Wait here," said Alex. "I'm going to get the raft." He leaped down the bank and they saw him race across the sands as the first heavy, blessed drops fell. He upended the raft and shouldered it, and presently he was back again, panting and breathless.

"Get in among the trees, under the thickest stuff you can find," he said jerkily.

They forced their way into the thicker jungle, with the raindrops splashing on to their shoulders and the glare from the burning trees on the far bank lighting their way. Then they stopped, wedging the raft at an angle to carry off the rain and making a rough shelter among the trees, stowing the bundles and the baby under it as the slow drops turned to the full, drumming downpour of the monsoon. . . .

It was still raining when the dawn broke greyly over the drenched miles of blackened, smoking wasteland, the pock-marked face of the river and the sodden jungle around them where the canes and the tall grass sagged under the weight of water.

Winter heard Alex stir, and opened her eyes to see him walk out into the pouring greyness. She sat up, pushing the wet hair back from her face and shoulders and saw that Lou was still asleep, wearing nothing but the cotton chemise in which she had swum the river and with her arm about the box in which the baby slept.

Presently Lou sat up, rubbing her eyes. She looked up at the grey, weeping skies and round at the sodden jungle, and said briskly: "We shall have to build a hut."

Alex returned, pushing through the drenching undergrowth. His face was grim and set.

"What is it?" Winter asked.

"That goat!" said Alex forcefully.

Lou gave a choked cry and ran to the side of the shelter where they had tethered the goat. There was nothing there but a chewed piece of rope. The goat had gone.

"We must find it," said Lou. "We must! How am I to feed Amanda? It can't have gone far."

"Don't be silly!" Alex said sourly. "Give it some rice, or boil it some flour and water. No one is going to notice smoke today."

"Will you stop calling her 'it'!" snapped Lou in sudden and irrational fury.

Alex grinned. "You're getting damned maternal, Lou. One day you'll persuade yourself that it—sorry, she—is your own child."

"She is," said Lou, and went to join Winter, who was building a fire in a hollow tree that she had discovered some twenty yards from their shelter.

Alex looked after her with a half smile that turned into a grimace of pain. He went into the shelter and found the small tin of opium pills and swallowed a few of them with brandy. *I cannot go sick now*, he thought dizzily.

But no amount of brandy and opium could keep the fever at bay, and half an hour later Winter, bringing him hot food on a plate of leaves, found him lying under a tree a few

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HEARING a tape recorder for the first time a few months ago, a Blackpool showman gleefully approached Albert Johnson, head of a British firm importing German-made recorders, and said: "I am convinced that this is the stuff to give the girls along the front. Is it possible to put one of these machines inside a booth and work it with a sixpence-in-the-slot mechanism?" Johnson thought it was.

Starting with three booths, the showman has now ordered two hundred tape recorders, and recent reports indicate that he is well on the way to a fortune.

Holidaymakers enter the booth, place a coin in the slot and, as a red light appears, begin to speak into a built-in microphone. After a few minutes the recording stops, the machine rewinds and plays back. Family and friends cram into the booth to listen.

"With his instinctive knowledge of human nature," says Johnson, "that man had immediately grasped the basic appeal of the tape recorder: to hear ourselves as others hear us."

Strongly believing it himself, Johnson, a tall, urbane business man of forty-six, is toying with the idea of showing every stage- and television-struck teenager in the country how good or how bad she really is. On the top, non-erasable track of a twin-track tape he plans to record a famous band playing dance music: the potential performer would then sing the song's lyric on the background of the music, recording it on the normal bottom track, and could try again and again. "Sing with Ted Heath, or Billy Cotton," could be the slogan.

The tape recorder—or "Little Big-Ears," as one American comedian calls it—is the fastest selling line of the electronics-in-the-home boom which is now sweeping Britain. A machine which takes any sounds or electrical signals fed into it through a microphone, converts them into magnetic impulses on a plastic tape and then reconverts and amplifies them, it was almost unknown in this country until 1950.

WITH only broadcasters and professional performers using it, the cheapest recorder then cost about £450. Now, led by E.M.I., Philips and Grundig, forty-one firms manufacture or sell seventy different tape recorders whose prices range from £1,000 to thirty-five guineas. E.M.I.'s "BTR 2"—a studio instrument—is the size of a large filing cabinet; the smallest, the German-made Minifon wire recorder, a close cousin of the tape variety, is the size of a box of a hundred cigarettes, weighs two pounds and can record a 30,000-word novel or fifty dance tunes on a single reel.

The keen competition which prevails between manufacturers prevents exact sales figures from being known, but estimates show that about three-quarters of a million tape recorders are being used in Britain, with an annual increase of between 50,000 and 100,000. A single retailer in a London suburb sells four hundred tape recorders a year to the general public who want to preserve baby's first cries, a symphony heard on a radio set, or the sounds of a weekend party.

"People will stop buying tape recorders when they stop buying mirrors," says one salesman. "They are just as keen on hearing as on seeing themselves."

Tape recorders have been used for a wide variety of purposes. One Scots minister got a job in Canada by recording a sermon and sending the tape across the Atlantic. A wedding photographer in Reading admits to making more money recording wedding speeches and selling the tapes to the guests than he makes in

Continued on page 40

Box of tricks with big ears

by *RENÉ LECLER*

Albert Johnson's tape recorders are booming: they can listen in to a telephone conversation—or capture a baby's first cry



John Ridley, promotion manager of a tape recorder firm, has built up a library of his children's voices since they were born



"It's very good of you to take
it like that, Captain Egmont,"
said Lavinia in a trembling tone

ILLUSTRATED BY COLEMAN

LOVE AND MONEY

by PHYLLIS BENTLEY

A timid creature, the wife of Walter Egmont. Even he could not guess how power would transform her . . .

WHEN Lavinia Crabtree married Walter Egmont just after the first World War, Walter was a large, handsome, easy-going young man in his late twenties, who had just ceased to be a captain in one of the West Riding regiments, and wore a decoration said to be well deserved. He was rich and well-born, as Annotsfield understood the term, for he belonged to one of those textile families which had made cloth on the banks of the River Ire for goodness knew how long and had enjoyed wealth since the coming of the industrial revolution.

His people lived in a large mid-Victorian mansion in the Ire Valley known as Mount Hall; there was a baronetcy somewhere among his cousins; the fact that his ancestors had probably been Flemish weavers was long forgotten, and the Egmonts mixed with "county" society. In short, Walter was quite the best match in Annotsfield at that time.

Accordingly a good deal of irritation and scepticism was expressed when Lavinia Crabtree, who did not come out of the same social drawer at all and it was no use pretending otherwise, got hold of Walter. Her father was in textiles too, of course—who in Annotsfield wasn't?—but the difference between Messrs. Crabtree and Crabtree's small back-street premises and the huge Egmont mills was as vast as that, in those days, between the Annotsfield secondary school which had sharpened Lavinia's wits and the famous public school which Walter had attended.

How ever had Lavinia met Walter in the first place? At the Annotsfield Choral Society, replied rumour. A famous tenor who came to sing in the *Messiah* was staying with the Egmonts, who were always musically inclined, so naturally Walter and his mother—a widow at this time—went behind the scenes in the interval to drink coffee with the conductor and artists. Lavinia, whose clear, penetrating and accurate if small soprano had won her a place in the choir, was helping to serve the coffee—just like her, said rumour unkindly; always fussing about and managing everything—and some incident concerning a dropped cup or missing sugar had placed the Egmonts under a small obligation to her.

In fact, while Lavinia fussed at Mrs. Egmont's elbow with the sugar bowl, that large lady, turning aside impatiently, spilled her coffee over Lavinia's *de rigueur* white choral frock. Accordingly, when Walter saw Lavinia at the Annotsfield Mayor's Ball, he felt obliged to ask her to dance with him—just like Walter, said rumour, shaking its head; the kindest, the nicest, the

most chivalrous and truly gentlemanly man, was Walter Egmont—and, of course, after that he had no chance. Lavinia was shrewd, and pretty enough in a way—though a poky little thing, said rumour, reluctantly signing a cheque for a wedding present suitable to the Egmont status. She couldn't be shaken off once she got her claws into him.

It was said that Mrs. Egmont senior disliked the match and opposed it bitterly, and certainly she withdrew from Mount Hall and went to live in Bournemouth, where she soon conveniently died.

Councillor Crabtree, on the other hand, determined to show that his daughter was as good as an Egmont, settled a row of small houses, called Irebridge Terrace, on her by way of marriage portion.

One must admit, concluded rumour grudgingly, that Lavinia adored Walter—but so she should, considering all he offered her; it was easy to adore such a husband as young Walter Egmont in 1919.

Rumour was correct in several of its external facts. But the details of the incident at the Mayor's Ball which bound Walter to Lavinia were known only to Walter, Lavinia and Mrs. Egmont senior. If Mrs. Egmont senior could have been omitted from that list, perhaps everything would have turned out differently.

PROBABLY only those who belonged to that first war generation will remember what a craze for dancing seized upon the young men and women returning from the war. They danced morning, noon and night; they drove about the country in search of dancing; some of them thronged to dancing classes to learn the latest variants of the art.

Lavinia, whose ambitious parents wished to give her every possible social advantage, had had the very best dancing tuition available in Annotsfield, and her mind, clear and sharp like her voice, had picked up accurately every turn and twist imposed by local fashion. She was small and neat and performed these sometimes rather ridiculous turns with an earnest precision rather lacking in grace.

Walter, on the other hand, tall and big and careless, had certainly not thought that attendance at dancing classes was the sort of thing Walter Egmont should do. Accordingly, he lumbered along through the tango he and Lavinia were supposed to be dancing, in a cheerful waltzing style, rather amused than otherwise by the antics about him, protecting Lavinia skilfully with his large person from clashing

couples, humming the tune below his breath, smiling occasionally kindly down at the thin little girl quivering anxiously in his arms, but not in the least attempting the proper steps.

Lavinia tripped over his feet. "Sorry!" apologized Walter cheerfully, holding her up firmly in his massive arms. "Sorry!" he said a moment later, as she tripped again.

Her third stumble produced more serious results, for Lavinia, quite off balance, positively butted Walter's white shirtfront with her head. She blushed crimson with mortification, for several passing couples had seen the contretemps and smiled, no doubt thinking it all her fault.

"I'm afraid I'm not very good at this dance, what?" said Walter in his deep, pleasant tones. "Let's give up, shall we?"

He tucked her arm beneath his and led her from the ballroom. Just outside the door there was a foyer, quite empty, surrounded by settees and palms. The empty space of the foyer was Lavinia's undoing.

"The steps are quite easy, really," ventured Lavinia.

"I daresay," agreed Walter, steering her towards the least languishing settee.

"They go like this, you see," said Lavinia. She detached her arm from Walter's and began to tango alone up and down the foyer.

"You just go on doing the same series of steps over and over again," she said. "You see, it's quite easy. If you'd just try, I'm sure you'd find it easy," she pleaded, stretching a hand out as if to take one of Walter's. "It's easiest at first to do it side by side."

"Well," said Walter, colouring with embarrassment, "perhaps some other time."

"Why not now?" said Lavinia brightly. She picked up his hand where it lay limply down his trouser-seam and gave him a little pull towards her. "Like this—one and two and—"

IT was at this moment that Mrs. Egmont, senior, escorted by a "regular" colonel in full-dress scarlet, swept across the foyer. Her look of horror as she perceived her son—*her son*—playing tricks of some kind in a public room with a common little girl in a rather sharp shade of pink, was for a moment uncontrollable and Lavinia received its full blast.

Then Mrs. Egmont with an effort composed her features.

"Are you coming up soon to the buffet, Walter?" she drawled in a cold, commanding tone.

"In a moment, Mother," returned Walter, courteous and easy as always.

A trifle reassured—her son quite lacked the confusion of guilt—Mrs. Egmont swept on towards the staircase. Walter and Lavinia sat down on a settee side by side. There was a pause.

"I'm terribly sorry," gulped Lavinia at length.

"For what? It was very kind of you to try to teach me—I'm very grateful," said the chivalrous Walter. "Only I'm no good at that kind of thing, I'm afraid."

"It's very good of you to take it like that, Captain Egmont," said Lavinia in a trembling tone.

"Not a captain now," said Walter mildly.

For the first time since the debacle he looked at her, and saw to his horror that tears were standing in her eyes. All his protective instinct rushed up to the summons of a woman's tears. *Poor little kid*, he thought, with her thin, dark hair and her awful dress, and her bright eyes.

Her neck and arms were very thin. There was a kind of childishness and innocence about her. . . . *Only a very inexperienced girl would try to teach a fellow to dance at a Mayor's Ball*, he thought.

"I was wondering," he began in his most deferential tone, "whether you would possibly have a dance of another kind with me later? Lancers, you know, or a waltz—something I

know and wouldn't be such a fool at? If you would forgive me, and let me have the first extra, I should be very grateful."

"Oh, Captain Egmont!" breathed Lavinia, gazing at him adoringly. To be swept up out of the profound humiliation of a fearful social blunder to the heights of having two dances with Walter Egmont was a transition from hell to heaven; she could have fallen in gratitude at his feet.

The tears overflowed. "Here, take this," said Walter Egmont gruffly, proffering a large, clean linen handkerchief.

Six months later they were married. . . .

At first all went well. Walter seemed to enjoy tenderly and gravely instructing Lavinia in the ways of her new life; clearly his protective feelings must always have been very strong and were now finding full scope. On her side, Lavinia learned quickly; her nature was active and industrious and she became quite an efficient chatelaine of Mount Hall—perhaps just a little over-fussy at times when a full glass fell to the carpet or Walter was late for a meal, but no worse than many other wives of similar standing.

SHE now dressed reasonably well in a dull way, knew the proper things to say and altogether interfered with Walter's pursuits less than his friends had feared. Meanwhile the Annotsfield Corporation ran a new bus route along Irebridge Terrace, where Lavinia's dowry houses stood; the houses became shops and their rentable value rose considerably, which was pleasant—it was nice for Lavinia to have a little pocket money of her own.

The first ill-luck of the Walter Egmonts was in the matter of children. Lavinia experienced a terribly difficult confinement with her first child, and the little girl, christened Edith May after her two grandmothers, was born with a delicate constitution and a slight malformation of the left foot.

Lavinia, who had really been very ill, rose up from bed before she was fit to do so in order to care for the child. Her devotion to little May was so intense and so tireless, with massage and medicaments whether internal or external, she was so punctual and so exact, that the women of the Egmont circle began to feel a very considerable respect for her.

That child owes Lavinia her life twice over," they said. "Only Lavinia's absolute devotion has kept the poor little thing alive at all."

But the Walter Egmonts had no more children; and—though May was a sweet, bright child—this must have been a great disappointment to them; whether it was due just to bad luck, or because Lavinia was not willing to try again on account of the bad time she'd had, or because the chivalrous Walter did not wish her to run the risk of another painful and dangerous confinement, was not, of course, publicly known, though the last alternative was regarded as most likely.

Presently Councillor Crabtree, during an outburst of fury at the General Strike in 1926, had a stroke and died. His affairs were found to be in some disorder. Walter, of course, tidied them up; it was rumoured that he found himself quite a bit out of pocket as a result.

The widowed Mrs. Crabtree was taken to live at Mount Hall. This could only be regarded as yet another piece of ill-luck, for she was rather a disagreeable old woman, used to having her own way and horribly penetrating. Lavinia's care for her was really quite exemplary, and callers winced sympathetically for her beneath her mother's sarcasms.

The next piece of ill-luck for Walter and Lavinia was that Councillor Crabtree's former partner, Lavinia's uncle Thomas Crabtree, quietly shot himself in order to avoid bankruptcy. It was now getting towards the end of the nineteen-twenties, and the terrible shadow of business regression was creeping over England. Bankruptcy and suicide were not as unfamiliar now in the West Riding as they used to be, and nobody blamed Walter Egmont for



allowing the Crabtree bankruptcy proceedings to take their course without any proffers of assistance on his part.

"No use throwing good money after bad," said the West Riding textile trade sagely.

Walter Egmont did, however, take into his household Lavinia's youngest cousin Janet, a quiet, good girl of seventeen or so, who made herself useful at Mount Hall—earned her keep, as it were—by helping to look after old Mrs. Crabtree and little May.

So far, so good. Walter and Lavinia had had their troubles, but only such as the usual chances and changes of this mortal life might bring upon them. Walter was the source, the well-spring, of all wealth and comfort; Lavinia had gladly received wealth and comfort from him for herself and her relations.

But now a change seemed to come over Walter. He became absent-minded and irritable. He looked haggard. He slept ill. He scolded the gardener over some twopenny-ha'penny bill for bulbs—he who had so often gently led Lavinia along the paths of

CONVERSATION—I

The greatest things gain by being said simply; they are spoiled by emphasis.

La Bruyère

open-handed liberality. He drove off in the morning to the Egmont mills with a look on his face as if he were a Christian entering a lion-filled arena; he returned at night pale, without appetite, exhausted.

When Lavinia urged him to see a doctor, he positively shouted at her. "Nonsense! Don't talk such nonsense, Vinny! I'm perfectly well!"

His uneasy, angry tone alarmed his wife and frightened May, who burst into tears.

"Don't cry, my darling. Don't mind Daddy," said Walter, drawing the child to him and kissing her. Then he put her gently away, rose, pressed his wife's arm affectionately and left the room. Lavinia, May and Janet were left staring at each other in dismay.

The truth was very simple. It was now 1931, and the fearful business slump had reached even the Egmont mills. There were few customers for the Egmont cloth, and those there were wished to buy it at the current low price, whereas it had been made

from yarn bought from the spinner at a much higher price a month or two ago.

One could either give in and cease to make cloth, in which case one was irretrievably bankrupt and ruined; or one could struggle on, making cloth for stock, hoping for better days, and finding the money for the wages bill and the spinner's monthly account by throwing into the battle all one's other resources.

The bank in Annotsfield, where once the Egmont credit was immense, impregnable, had now advanced an overdraft of many thousands of pounds to Walter, and held as security against it all the scrip of his other investments, together with the title deeds of the mills, fabric and the Mount Hall estate.

The date of the month when the just-mentioned incident occurred was the twenty-third. At that time, by long tradition, the spinner's monthly account must inexorably be paid on the twenty-fifth. In spite of all his efforts, Walter was some £3,000 short of the necessary amount, and he was faced with ruin.

After a few moments he returned, looking white but composed, and said to his wife: "I'd like to speak to you privately, Vinny."

Lavinia rose and followed him to the room he called his study.

"Vinny," said Walter quietly. "My dear, I regret the necessity deeply, but I'm afraid I must ask you for some help."

"Help? You're ill?" cried Lavinia. "No. I am in financial difficulties," said Walter.

Lavinia's eyes widened, and she gazed at him with incredulity.

"Everyone in the West Riding is more or less in financial difficulties today," said Walter. "I don't think I am more to blame than the next man. However, that's beside the point. The facts are—"

He explained his situation in simple terms, and concluded by asking her to lend him the title deeds of her row of houses, so that he could deposit them at the bank and receive the necessary additional overdraft on their security.

"Will you do that for me, Vinny?"

"Of course, Walter!" said Lavinia smoothly. She looked down at her hands and did not meet his grateful, loving gaze.

Perhaps Lavinia had never really forgiven the Egmonts for that awful ball-room scene. Perhaps she had always at the bottom of her heart resented Walter's chivalry, his continual giving. (Who, after all, wants to be the everlasting object of chivalry, the continual recipient in the human exchange?) At

any rate, in that moment when Walter made his request, her whole aspect changed. Released from its obligations of gratitude, her nature flew up into its natural shape of domination.

Walter first became aware of this on the following morning when he took Lavinia to the manager of his bank in Annotsfield to deposit the title deeds of Irebridge Terrace.

He removed the deeds from his safe at Mount Hall, where they had reposed since Councillor Crabtree's death—in point of fact Walter had paid out as much to tidy up the councillor's affairs as would have bought the whole terrace outright, but this thought did not occur to him—and put them with a grave smile into Lavinia's hands, who took them firmly. Walter found himself a little surprised; he had somehow expected that his wife would return them to him.

Of course Lavinia's signature would be necessary at the bank and the transaction of depositing the deeds must be officially hers, but somehow Walter did not quite like her attitude of possession meanwhile. It would have been more graceful if she had quickly and, as it were, warmly and sympathetically, returned the deeds, pressing them urgently upon him.

Lavinia, however, held them firmly in her lap throughout their drive to the bank. Still—this was just one of those failures in Lavinia, due to her faulty upbringing, which excited Walter's tenderest pity and love.

The interview was extremely painful to Walter; so painful indeed that sweat not only stood on his forehead but actually rolled down his cheek. The thought that he, Walter Egmont, should positively have to borrow his wife's little property to extricate the great Egmont Mills from a threat of bankruptcy, was terrible to him.

He breathed quickly and felt choked in the manager's snug sanctum; he moved his big body about restlessly; he spoke with feverish haste; his great desire—the only one left in his life, he felt at that moment—was to get out of the bank into the air. Sign the papers, leave the deeds, get out.

BUT the bank manager felt it his duty to explain to Lavinia exactly what the deposit of her title-deeds as security implied, and from that point, in some way which Walter did not quite understand, the man was led to embark on a résumé of the whole Egmont Mills situation.

The bank manager—who of course was in an agony himself, on the one hand continually pressed by his head office to tidy up the bank's quite frightful financial commitments in the West Riding, and on the other seeing long-established businesses collapse at his mere word—concealed his trouble by an artificial smoothness, but his bland phrases dropped like some colourless but corrosive acid on Walter's skin, till he felt raw and bleeding from top to toe.

Lavinia, on the other hand, listened with keen attention. From the manager's admirably clear exposition she fully grasped the essential fact that she, Lavinia Crabtree, could save or ruin the great Egmonts by merely saying yes or no. She looked down at her hands to conceal the triumph which shone in her eyes.

At last the thing was done and they were outside.

"Thank you, Vinny my dear," said Walter heavily. "Now about the car . . . we must get you home again . . . I'll get Brigg to drop me at the mill and—"

He was about to make one of his usual courteous and generous arrangements for his wife's comfort when Lavinia interrupted. "I've some shopping to do in Resmond Street; Brigg can drive me there," she said.

Walter, though astonished and disconcerted, did not realize that he was hearing Lavinia's first assertion of power. The power of wealth. For all possession is wealth when others need it. . . .

Lavinia's metamorphosis was physical as well as spiritual. She held herself erect; her bust swelled; her dark eyes sharpened. Her thin mouth now



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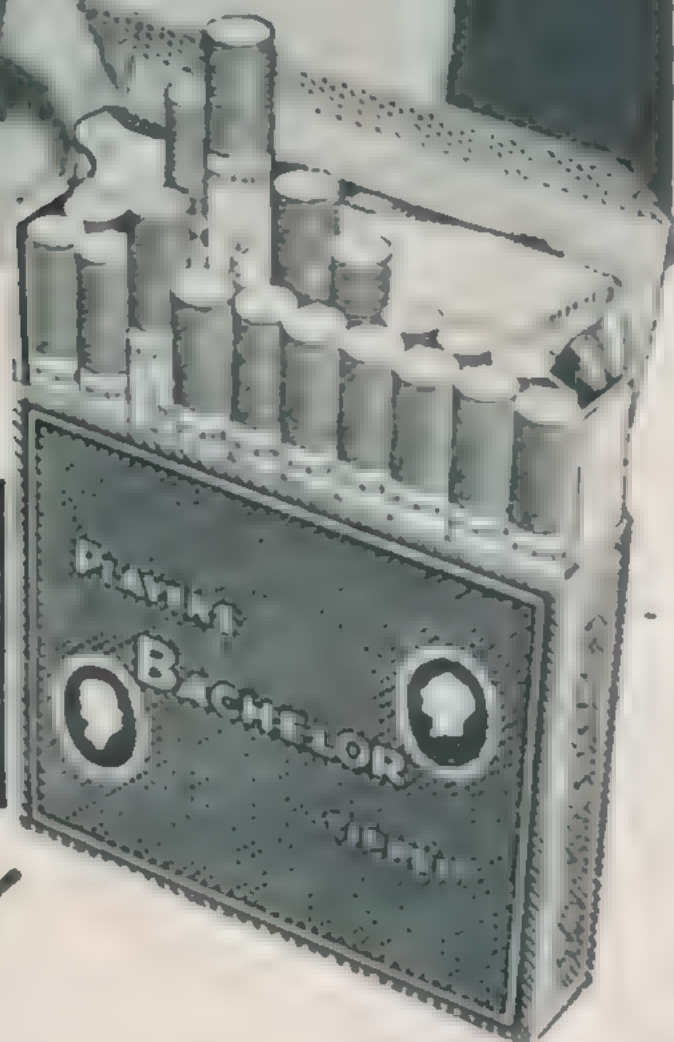
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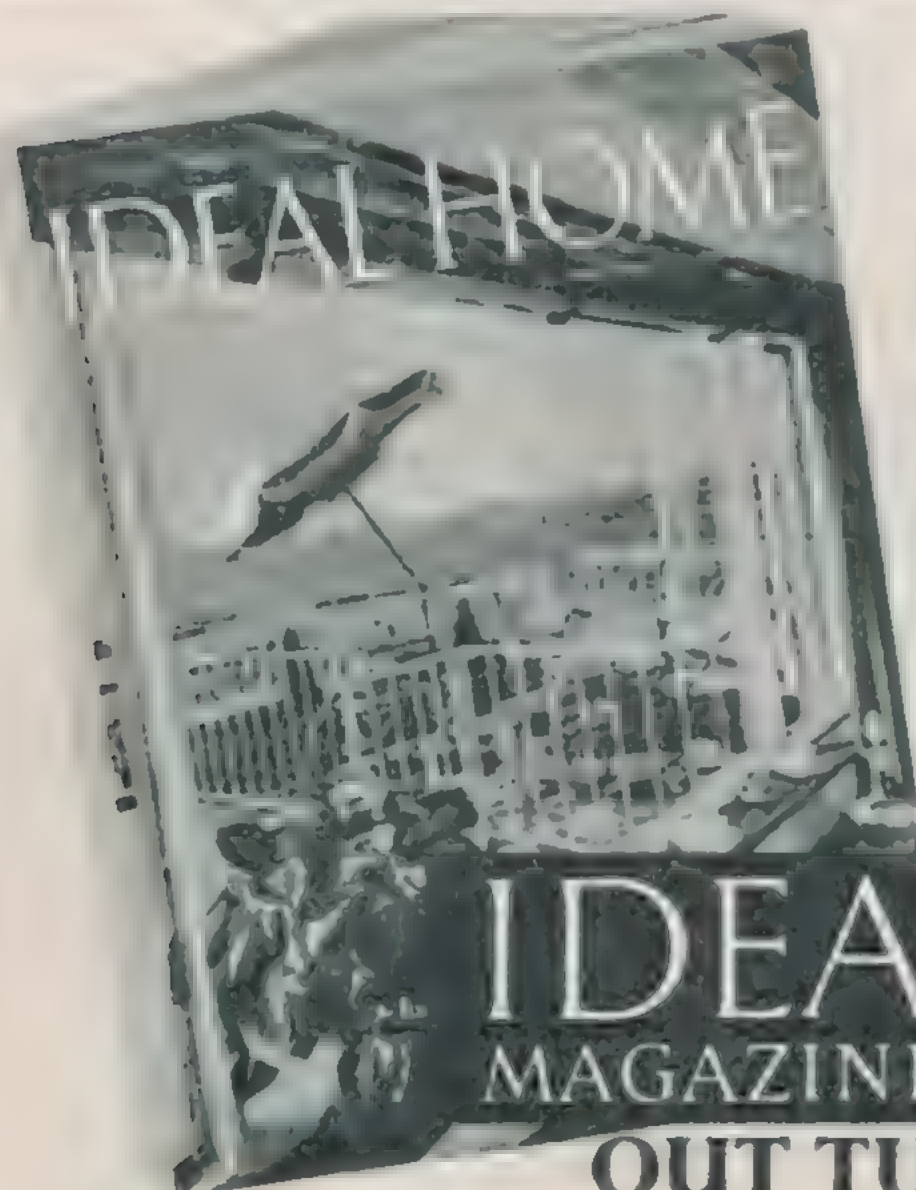
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often wore a sophisticated, almost a quietly merry little twist of triumph at its left corner—for example, when she was winning a skirmish against old Mrs. Crabtree, whom she defeated with increasing frequency these days.

Lavinia now chose her clothes better and wore them with infinitely more assurance; she dressed her hair in clearer lines. Her speech became more resonant, more emphatic, more commanding; her vocabulary seemed to increase and her accent improve.

Meanwhile, she "stood by" Walter in his troubles in a most staunch and wifely manner. She economized, she cut down staff, she undertook domestic duties herself and carried them out in a robustly cheerful and efficient way. It was largely due to Lavinia, said elderly Egmont aunts and young Egmont cousins, whose living all depended upon the family business, that the mill pulled through the depression so well.

LAVINIA knew all the mill's affairs, and questioned Walter every day to keep her knowledge up to date. Her judgment was shrewd. She harassed and harangued the easy-going Walter, she kept him up to the mark and would not allow him to be generous and foolish. If he showed a disposition to allow a merchant to cancel purchases or to purchase at a lower price than he had contracted for, Lavinia shut her mouth with a snap, gazed at Walter meaningfully and was silent. Walter then remembered the houses in Irebridge Terrace, and did as Lavinia wished.

Indeed, the real reason why Egmont Mills survived the slump was probably because Walter gradually came to feel that Lavinia's Irebridge Terrace houses must be retrieved if it was the last thing he did—he couldn't even die till that damned terrace was redeemed.

He stuck at the job, he declined to be defeated, he even learned to juggle bank accounts, and twice purposely missed the last post with cheques so as to give himself a few extra hours to ensure that they could be honoured. He rushed after business, he wrangled over details, he quite hounded his employees—who, terrified of being dismissed to join the ever-lengthening queue at the labour exchange, shared his anxiety to keep the mill afloat.

Walter did all this, and it saved Egmont Mills. But it was against his nature and he loathed it; and strange, uneasy feelings increasingly troubled his hitherto uncomplicated heart.

England went off the gold standard. The slump slowly passed. The West Riding climbed painfully to its knees and, though trailing about its body like heavy weeds innumerable debts, overdrafts, mortgage payments and obligations, eventually stood up and raised its head.

The Irebridge Terrace deeds had once or twice before almost emerged from the bank's strongroom, but had been sucked back again by recurring emergencies. Now at last they could safely be released.

Walter came home one evening with the long envelope in his hand and went into Lavinia's bedroom, where he could hear her talking on the telephone—he had been sleeping in his dressing-room lately, for he was suffering from obstinate insomnia and did not wish to disturb his wife.

Lavinia was laying down the law to the unfortunate secretary of some committee or other of which she was chairman, for she was chairman of many committees nowadays. In firm, clear, concise terms she informed the secretary of her duty and left her no alternative but to proceed with it promptly. As she nodded to her husband across the telephone, her eyes held that satisfied gleam which now so often brightened—and hardened—them. She finished the conversation and put the receiver down decisively.

"Yes, Walter?" she said.

"Here are the deeds of your Irebridge Terrace houses, Vinny," said Walter, proffering the envelope. "I'm glad I can put them safely in your hands again at last."

He smiled, not without a touch of pride and, simple, loyal creature that

he still was, expected a kiss, some thanks, a word of wifely praise. Instead he saw a strange expression cross his wife's face. She looked quite disconcerted and vexed, he thought. In fact, she looked disappointed.

She is disappointed, thought Walter, amazed. She liked me to be in her debt. She liked me to be under an obligation to her.

All the vague distaste and revolt he had felt recently suddenly rose up in him like a flood of nausea. He choked it down, but when it had gone he knew he no longer loved his wife.

"What shall we do about Janet?" said Lavinia crossly.

She was thinking aloud. As long as Walter was in her debt for the loan of the houses, she did not mind that he should have to support her cousin. But now Walter was out of her debt and she did not wish to return to the old humiliating situation of being in his debt—certainly not on Janet's account.

"Janet?" said Walter, perplexed by this, to him, inexplicable transition. (To Walter, obligations were not measured in cash.) He worked it out on his own lines, slowly. "You mean you think we ought to pay her, now that we can afford?"

"Pay her?"

"For looking after May, and being a kind of secretary to you, and so on."

"Janet has too great a sense of her obligation to me to think of such a thing," said Lavinia stiffly.

"What's the problem, then?"

"Oh, never mind! You wouldn't understand," said Lavinia.

"You say that rather too often to me nowadays, Vinny," said Walter quietly.

Lavinia gave a brittle laugh. "You used to say it to me."

"I never said it to you."

"Your mother did."

"That's not the same thing, is it?"

"Oh, well . . . never mind. We must change or we shall be late," said Lavinia dismissively.

She threw the packet of deeds carelessly down on the telephone table. They slipped off the edge and fell to the ground.

Walter picked them up and replaced them on the table. He then without a word left his wife's bedroom, to which he never returned. . . .

For several years after this incident the Egmonts maintained a decent façade of happy married life. Lavinia snapped at Walter more than was

CONVERSATION—2

And 'tis remarkable that they talk most who have the least to say.

Matthew Prior

pleasant to hear, but then Lavinia nowadays snapped at everybody, so snapping at Walter meant nothing serious; it was clear she still regarded her husband with possessive conjugal affection.

To Walter's friends it seemed that Walter's heart was not now in his married life, but he maintained his courtesy towards his wife so steadily that Lavinia did not perceive his alienation.

Until one summer Sunday evening. In family life Sunday evening is often a dangerous time. The tedium of Sunday has accumulated, the problems of Monday loom; between boredom and apprehension the spirit tosses uneasily, vulnerable to offence.

Walter was sitting alone on the Mount Hall terrace, smoking a cigar. His large form overflowed the deck-chair in which he lounged; one trouser leg, pulled up as he sat, revealed a cascading sock and an inch or two of ankle.

Altogether he looked slack and dreamy and as if he were enjoying himself doing nothing, and this was irritating to the energetic Lavinia, who



"We've already got this one"

emerged from the french windows in a bad temper after a brush with her mother. The voices of May and Janet, who had been sent by Lavinia to water some prized antirrhinums at the side of the house, could be heard in the distance.

"Walter, have you written to your cousin?" said Lavinia sharply, referring to a letter of condolence she had urged Walter to dispatch that night.

"No," said Walter.

"Really, Walter!"

"I'm thinking what to say. I'll do it after supper."

"Why not now?" said Lavinia with her infuriating smugness.

"The post's gone anyway."

"Not in Annotsfield. Janet could easily run it down to the G.P.O."

"I don't want to write it now, Lavinia," said Walter quietly.

"No . . . you'd rather sit and do nothing. That's you all over, Walter. Nobody would ever do anything in this house if I didn't drive them to it."

Walter still saying nothing and making no move, Lavinia's vexation mounted.

"If you knew how slack and stupid you look lounging there, Walter," she said angrily in her quick, vehement tones.

"You might be a young man in a dream of love." She laughed contemptuously.

Walter said nothing. Suddenly hot colour flooded Lavinia's face, she rushed forward to confront her husband and shouted:

"You are in love. You're in love with another woman."

Walter slowly turned on her a strange, deep look. Lavinia was used to seeing his brown eyes kind and attentive; tonight they appeared sardonic and cold.

"I'm certainly not in love with you, Lavinia," he said.

Lavinia screamed abuse at him with all the fury of a woman quite unexpected to be scorned.

"You vile beast! How dare you treat me so. And what about May?"

"Leave May out of this," said Walter quickly.

"How can you leave her out?" shouted Lavinia, perceiving her advantage.

"If you don't give me your word of honour to give this up, I'll tell your daughter."

"Tell her what, for heaven's sake?"

"About this . . . this affair of yours," said Lavinia, trembling with fury.

"There's no affair. I've never spoken a word of love to any woman but you."

"Give it up, or I'll tell your daughter . . . May shall know what kind of a man her father is, I promise you."

"Lavinia, you're a wicked woman," said Walter.

"Swear you'll give her up."

"Give who up?"

"This woman of yours. Don't tell me you aren't in love with some

woman or other, for I shan't believe you for a moment."

"Very well. I won't tell you that. I will tell you that I've not the slightest intention of being unfaithful to my marriage vows . . . for May's sake."

"You don't deny you're in love with someone?"

"What's the use, when you're determined not to believe me?"

"Did you call, Mummy?" called May, limping round the side of the house.

"No, dear, no! Go on with your watering," cried Lavinia, waving the child away imperiously.

"You had better keep your word, Walter," she went on in a low, savage tone, "or I'll see to it that you never see May again. You're entirely in my power, you see. Just as you were over the house deeds."

"Yes, I see that," said Walter. . . .

THE Egmonts now gradually became known to their acquaintances as a typical example of the incompatible husband and wife who remain together only for the sake of their child.

Walter's behaviour was courteous but cold and he avoided his wife's company whenever possible. Lavinia maintained the outward decencies, and did not attempt to discover the identity of the woman who had aroused those

"silly feelings" in Walter—she knew she could trust his word and unconsciously feared to rouse his anger by any such attempt, though to herself she said she could not "condescend" to it. But she often wore her smile of triumph when she spoke to him; she was reflecting with satisfaction:

"Well, I nipped that in the bud."

People who first met Walter and Lavinia during this period could not believe that they had once been a mutually adoring couple. What had they ever in common, inquired such new friends? Lavinia was widely detested for her intolerable bossiness, though almost as widely respected for her capacity to get public work done. Poor, dear Walter was regarded as an absolute pet, but of course far too easy-going and slow.

Where Lavinia's friends and her enemies concurred was in regarding her treatment of May as a mistake—though they differed as to its motive, her friends saying uneasily that Lavinia's devotion to the child led her astray, her enemies stating emphatically that Lavinia could not bear to let anyone in her power escape beyond its range.

Certainly Lavinia kept May at home all through her teens, allowing her to receive education only at a private day-school in Annotsfield, to and from which that nice Janet drove her every day.

May's contemporaries, now that the slump was dissipating, went away to expensive boarding-schools—Roedean

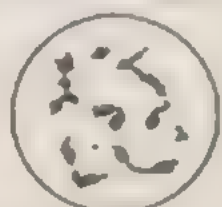
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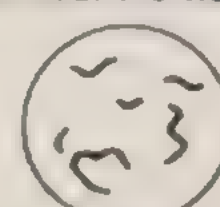
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and Cheltenham and Wycombe or perhaps Harrogate; May would have liked to follow their example and Walter was willing, but Lavinia scoffed the suggestion out of court. May, she said, was not strong enough yet to go away from home.

May accepted this ruling dutifully, but listened to the school tales of returned cousins with such a wistful air that the hearts of mere friends quite ached for her, and even cross old Mrs. Crabtree put in an anxious plea on her behalf.

This last interference excited Lavinia to fury. Having humiliated her mother by reminding her that she was eating the bread of Walter's charity and had no right to a voice in any Egmont affairs, she swept off to the pleasant little room known as May's study, where she found May and Janet together, and demanded in ringing tones: "Did you ask Grannie Crabtree to talk to me about going away to school, May?"

"No . . . yes . . . not exactly," stammered May, her heart beating fast. "She knew I wished to go . . . but I didn't ask her. That is—"

"I believe I mentioned it to Aunt Crabtree," put in Janet quietly.

"Never dare to do such a thing again!" cried Lavinia at her most imperious. "May is not fit to live a normal school life and the sooner she accepts that fact the better."

She swept from the room. After a moment's pause, during which May sat white and trembling, her delicate mouth a-quiver, her large eyes full of tears, Janet sprang to the girl's side and took her in her arms. May buried her face on Janet's shoulder and the two wept together.

May was a clever, scholarly child, and another attempt was made to give full play to her undoubted ability when she reached university age. This time the attempt was supported by May's headmistress, whom most parents found formidable. But Lavinia easily defeated her.

"You are not a mother, Miss Pannell . . . you cannot quite enter into my feelings," she said.

After this insulting thrust at Miss Pannell's spinsterhood she went on to hint at dark secrets in May's physiology; Miss Pannell withdrew her support from the university project and it fell to the ground.

So May stayed at home. Her life was not without its compensations, however. Lavinia indulged all her wishes save the one that really mattered, and May attended lectures and concerts and theatres, not only in Annotsfield but in Leeds and Bradford and even in Manchester, across the Pennines.

It was observed that sometimes May was accompanied by her father, whom she loved dearly, sometimes by her mother, who loved her dearly, almost always by that nice Janet, her devoted companion, but never by Walter and Lavinia at the same time. There seemed to be a tacit understanding between husband and wife not to spoil each other's pleasure in their daughter's company.

As the years went on it became generally recognized in Annotsfield that May Egmont—such beautiful eyes, my dear, and the sweetest disposition; musical, too, such a shame about that foot—looked quite happy whenever her mother was not with her, and Lavinia was so busy nowadays with public good works, where bossiness had full scope, that she accompanied her daughter less frequently than of old.

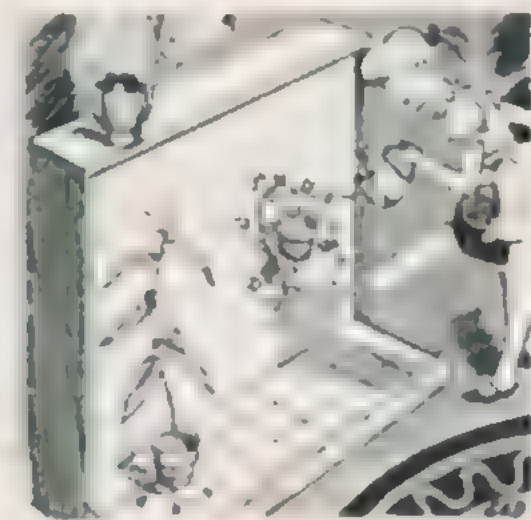
Thus it happened that when one of the Armitages, a quiet, nice man in the thirties, a distant connection of the Egmonts, with a university post in Oxford, began to pay "attentions" to May, Lavinia was not there often enough to perceive their trend.

She knew nothing of them, indeed, until one cold, dark afternoon in the December of 1938. On sweeping into Mount Hall with her usual imperious step, smiling with triumphant glee over her chairmanship of the meeting that afternoon—she had got her own way by beating down a good deal of opposition—she learned from the maid

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WE no longer use our bedroom fireplaces, so I brightened them by covering the tiled surround and grate with a rectangular piece of perforated hardboard, enamelled to tone with the rooms. To the wall I plugged a wooden

surround, and from the remaining wood fitted a kerb. These, when polished, add to the gay effect. The panel makes an excellent background for plants, which can be hung at the most effective level.—

A. J. Toseland, Stratford Drive, Norwich.

that Miss Crabtree was upstairs reading the newspaper to old Mrs. Crabtree, and that Mr. Egmont was in the library, having had tea.

"Where is May, Walter?" demanded Lavinia, sweeping in.

"She's gone to the choral concert."

"Oh . . . I'd forgotten it was tonight. But who's with her? And surely it's too early?" began Lavinia.

"Herbert Armitage has called and taken her off to the George for a bite before the show. I gave him my ticket," drawled Walter.

"Herbert Armitage?" cried Lavinia. "You've let her go out alone with him?"

"Why not? I think he may possibly be attached to May, you know. A very nice fellow," said Walter approvingly. "No harm in being a little older. Suitable. Same tastes."

"You don't mean to say he's thinking of marrying her?"

"He's hinted at it once or twice to me," said Walter. "In fact, I think he means to bring it to the point tonight."

"She's much too young to think of such a thing."

"She's eighteen."

"It's preposterous! It's out of the question. You'll marry her off and then I suppose you think you'll be free to go off with your woman," shouted Lavinia at the top of her voice.

Walter looked at her. "Haven't you forgotten that yet, Lavinia?"

"No! And you haven't either," said Lavinia brutally. "Don't try to pretend to me that you have."

"I've kept my word to you in the matter, however."

"I'd soon have made you know it if you hadn't."

Walter looked at her again. "You were not like this when we married, Vinny," he said.

"Whose fault is that?" cried Lavinia, rushing from the room.

She went straight out of the house by the side door to her car which, in spite of all her orders and instructions, Brigg had not yet put away. Although this disobedience was at the moment convenient, it enraged Lavinia. The whole world seemed to conspire to thwart her, she thought as, panting slightly—for she had put on weight the last few prosperous years—she climbed into the driving seat and slammed the door. Brigg delighted to misunderstand her instructions, Walter's whole heart was set on frustrating her, and now May. . . .

At the bottom of her heart Lavinia was deeply, painfully, unforgivably wounded by May's lack of confidence in her mother. That Walter should

know about this Armitage man and not Lavinia! But Lavinia would show May. May would find out her mistake. May should learn she had a mother. Lavinia would confront the pair at the George.

Of course, if May really wanted this Herbert Armitage . . . but how could she? He was far too old, a dry old stick, not well-off. . . . And besides, May was not suited to the requirements of marriage, thought Lavinia, remembering, with a pang compounded of jealousy, anger and protective love, the misery of her own confinement. No! May must not marry! She must stay peacefully at home with her loving mother.

It was important to catch them before the proposal was actually made, reflected Lavinia, swinging the car masterfully round into the front drive and putting her foot on the accelerator. . . .

The next moment, as it seemed, Lavinia opened her eyes to find herself gazing into the grave faces of Walter, May, Janet, old Mrs. Crabtree, their family doctor and a starched white person who was presumably a nurse. It was daylight; the chill, gloomy daylight of a winter dawn. The familiar furniture of her bedroom stood around her.

Lavinia had always been quick in the uptake, as the Yorkshire phrase goes, and she did not linger in comprehension now. She knew at once that in the dark she had driven full-tilt into the left-hand pillar of the Mount Hall gateway, had smashed up herself and the car, and was now about to die.

She foresaw the consequences with her usual shrewdness. May would marry Herbert Armitage after her mother's death. Well, let her have him if she wants, thought Lavinia, feeling very virtuous at thus yielding to her daughter's wish, though in reality her motive was: "If I can't be with May, neither shall Walter."

HER thoughts raced on: But Walter won't need May; as soon as I'm dead Walter will of course rush after that woman of his, whoever she may be; he's only in his forties, he's still a good-looking man.

As she thought this, and gazed up into Walter's serious, pitying, but not grief-stricken, face, a spasm of hatred convulsed Lavinia's heart.

I'll stop it if it's the last thing I do, she thought, grimly sardonic.

A smile of triumph curved her pale lips as in a flash she saw how the thing might be done.

"Walter," she murmured. It was

an effort to speak, but luckily, though her words came out in a hoarse croak, they were quite audible and distinct.

Walter gravely took her hand. For a moment his familiar clasp reminded her of the days when his touch had been an ecstasy, but this only strengthened her determination. He should not confer ecstasy on another woman.

"Walter," she said. "Look after May when I'm gone."

"Yes, Vinny," said Walter quietly.

"Walter, I want . . . I want . . . so as to be sure May is well looked after . . . I want you and Janet to marry and take care of her," said Lavinia.

Walter's eyes widened and he gave her a strange look, while from the other side of the bed came a gasp. Lavinia decided not to make the effort needed to turn her head, but she knew that the gasp, of course, came from poor, dear Janet.

Oh, it was a wonderful stroke, wonderful! thought Lavinia with vindictive glee; killing two birds with one stone was nothing to it. A Crabtree cousin was handsomely provided for, a burden added to the Egmonts, and Walter kept for ever from his love. For he wouldn't dare to marry anybody but Janet after his wife had expressed a deathbed wish for the match. If he did everybody would talk, for of course the nurse would chatter; nurses always did.

Lavinia smiled up at Walter in cruel triumph.

Just then a loud cackle came from old Mrs. Crabtree, who was holding herself upright by clutching the foot of the bed in her gnarled hands. Lavinia looked at her. She read—correctly—what was in her mother's face.

In horror she made a supreme effort, turned her eyes towards Janet and then towards Walter. Janet was softly radiant, Walter puzzled but content. Of course, of course! It was Janet whom Walter had been in love with all these last years. The good, quiet, nice Janet! Of course! They'd been too honourable to do anything about it, naturally, thought Lavinia with contempt.

But Mrs. Crabtree's basilisk eye could pierce the secrets of the most cunning hearts, let alone those so simple and straightforward as Janet's and Walter's. . . .

In a lurid flash of rage Lavinia perceived that her malice had overreached itself; her deathbed utterance had simply made it easy for Walter to marry his love.

Well, thought Lavinia angrily, at least I'll poison it for them; I'll. . . .

But it was too late now for Lavinia to do anything.

THE END

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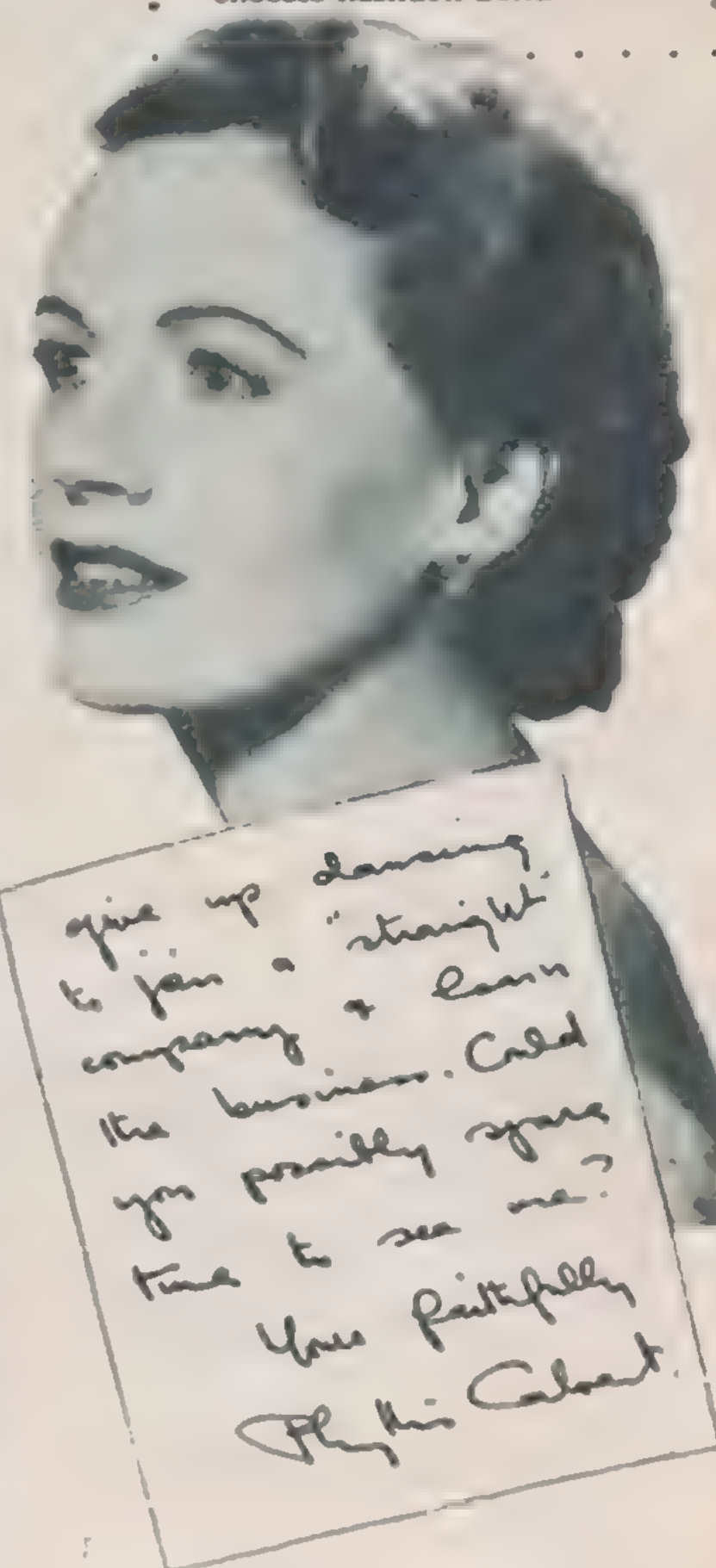
PHYLLIS
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"I was dancing with a touring company in the West of England," explains Miss Calvert. "The show was 'She Shall Have Music,' which later went to the Saville."

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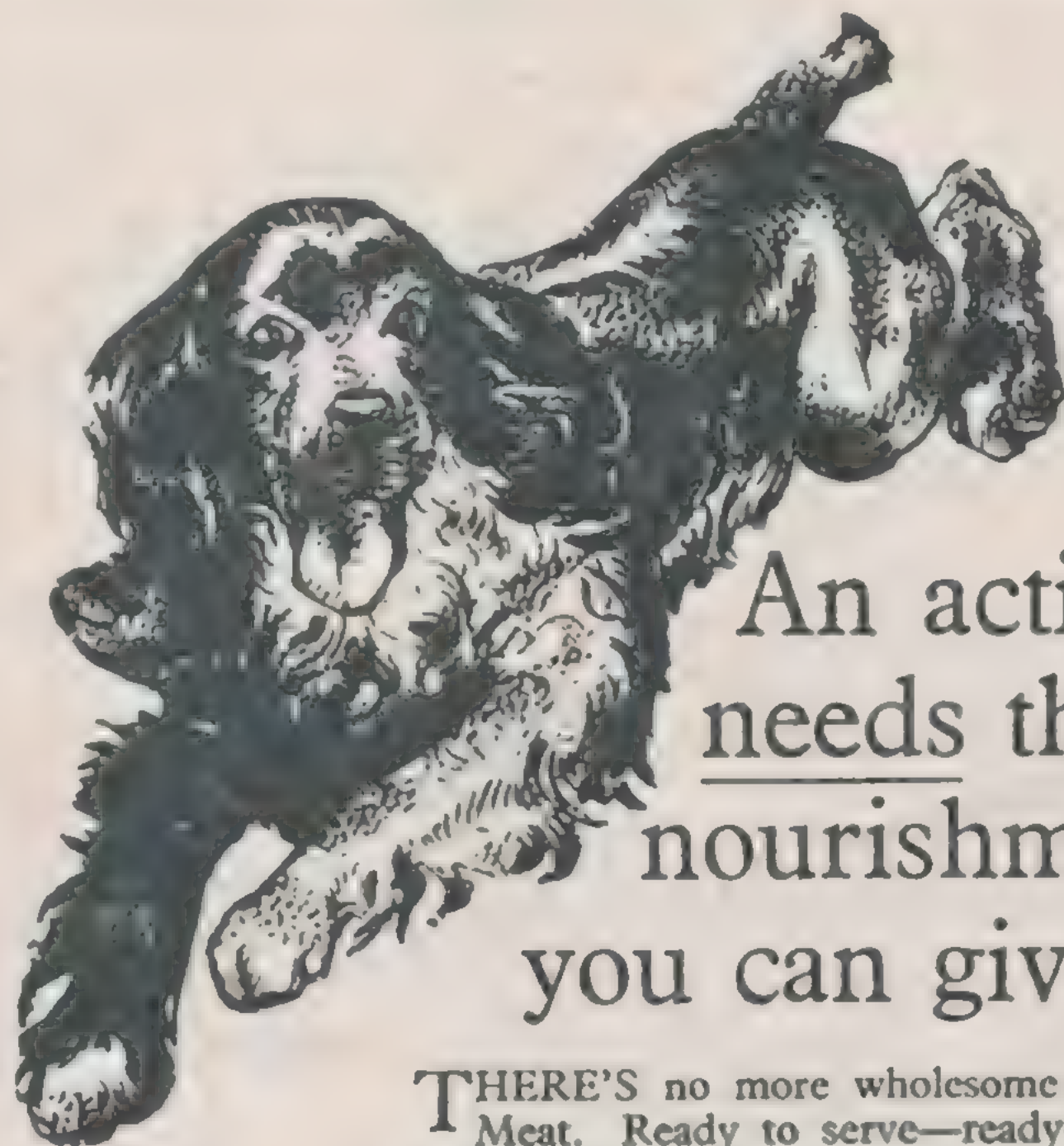


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Continued from page 23

before eating, passing through a series of showers when coming from a very "hot" area and so on.

Rumney told me that his father, now a storekeeper at Windscale, had before the war once worked in the furnaces of the iron ore works at Cleator Moor. In those days, this was a "depressed area" with nothing but the Whitehaven coal mine, the old iron ore workings and sheep farming. In some areas, unemployment reached eighty-three per cent. The new form of power, clean, intangible, though still not without its dangers, has brought a transformation. There are more jobs now than men.

For the rising atom plant engineers, as for the budding scientists, the future is full of promise. An apprentice climbing the ladder has the prospect of becoming a design engineer—a builder, in co-operation with the physicists and chemists, of Britain's new atomic power plants.

BUT the mind of Ronald Rumney was running on prospects overseas. And they, too, should be exciting. For today four great industrial consortiums, formed from our leading engineering concerns and representing a capital of many millions, plan to make the atomic piles a British export to the world, just as in earlier days were the steam engine, the locomotive and the power loom.

Both to enrich her export lifestream and to keep pace with her own ever-mounting industrial power requirements, Britain's need of atomic power is urgent. The government has given top priority to the vast atomic energy programme. As it gathers momentum, there is only one real stumbling block: a chronic shortage of trained scientists and engineers. And this could too easily prove fatal. Indeed, said Gethin Davey, Windscale's works general manager, the shortage is already making itself felt as badly needed men are drafted away to new projects.

Once again it is glaringly evident that Britain's whole future hangs on her ability to discover and husband her resources of brains and skill.

But now the need is recognized. The big push in technical education, announced in a White Paper in February, begins to gain momentum. In Whitehaven the new technical college, itself only recently opened, is to have a new wing by 1958. And Gethin Davey, the chairman of its governors, is hoping that the college will become associated with the technology of atomic energy production just as, say, Huddersfield Technical College is with woollen textiles.

At the hub of this rising new structure of technical education will be the regional colleges of advanced technology, working at university level. Sir David Eccles named the first eight of them a few weeks ago. And a leader among them, with eight thousand students and a staff of 190 teachers, is the Birmingham College of Technology.

Until very recently the Birmingham college had to struggle along in hopelessly overcrowded conditions scattered over a collection of old buildings and hutments. Now, as an earnest of the new status of technology in Britain, it is in process of moving into a fine seven-storey building which cost £1,500,000. The steel frame of a second instalment, equally large, is rising alongside. Further wings are scheduled.

Charles Partridge, the college's vice-principal and head of its electrical engineering department, delightedly showed me the dozens of fine new laboratories. The laboratories in his own department will have £200,000 worth of equipment.

His enthusiasm was understandable. For on the first day he joined the college, he told me, he had been shown the plans for the new building shortly to be erected. Now, twenty-two years later, he had it—with interest!

Fed from six "branch technical colleges" (two still to be erected) and two all-purpose day-release colleges around the city, the Birmingham College of Technology will be the centre of a three-tier system of technical

education in the area. Increasingly, its staple will be the sandwich course students from the many great industrial concerns around the city, reading and working in college and workshop alternately for the new Diploma of Technology (Engineering). At present there are about four hundred sandwich students at the college.

Does this new deal for technical education mean that the way ahead is now clear for youth and industry?

Certainly, Britain's ladder of opportunity has more and stronger rungs than ever before, but... There is a but.

On the day I was looking at Birmingham's new college, the teacher's representative on the city council's education committee was warning parents that, owing to overcrowded classrooms and an acute shortage of teachers, the whole system of secondary education in the city was in danger. The finest superstructure can be of little avail if the building underneath is defective.

Over Britain as a whole, many secondary modern schools are still mockeries of the intentions of the 1944 Act. Able children in them start with a handicap. Some grammar schools, on the other hand, are ill-equipped for science teaching, until recently a "Cinderella" subject.

Though this is the sphere where the major opportunities now lie, too many grammar school teachers, says Charles Partridge, continue to look on technology as the last resort for the hopelessly "uncultured" or the backward.

"Look here, Charles," they say to him, "I've a lad here who's no good at science and useless at maths. But he's a wonder with a bit of wire. Just the man for you!"

It is this attitude, a hangover from the classical tradition of the spacious days, that is largely responsible for the current famine of science and mathematics teachers which might yet prove fatal to Britain's industrial grand designs. Last year, the Birmingham College of Technology advertised fifty-seven staff vacancies, some of them several times. It still has thirty vacancies.

One great potential source of ability still goes largely untapped. Too many girls' schools continue to think on "botany-and-needlework" lines. In industrial concerns, where there are

CONVERSATION—3

Speaking without thinking is
shooting without aiming.

George Herbert

training arrangements for boys and girls, those for girls generally seem much shorter, narrower and inferior.

The assumption behind this is that the girls will marry and leave. This is some years out of date. In practice, they marry but do not leave. Even when they have children, they frequently return at a later date.

In all his years at the Birmingham College of Technology, Charles Partridge has had just three girl students in his electrical engineering department. All qualified and successfully held down jobs. And, indeed, he says, the now rapidly expanding "light current" side—electronics, telecommunications, etc.—is particularly well suited to women. He, for one, would be glad to see them.

The chief of the L.C.C.'s Youth Employment Service, J. Wale-Smith, agrees: "There are many girls who have what it takes. But relatively few seem to get the chance."

Windscale's "Atom Babes" are blazing a trail which other industries would do well to follow. For as the smoke pall lifts and the black old industrial Britain, hammered out on the anvil, gives place to the bright new Britain of atomic energy and automation, brawn is increasingly at a discount and the race will go to the nations which can most effectively tap the latent brain power of their rising generation.

In 1956, Britain's necessity is youth's blazing opportunity. THE END

A home of their own

Continued from page 9

only people in the neighbourhood who haven't complained about him. I do hope he's never pinched anything of yours?"

Bridget glanced anxiously at her husband. "No—no, I don't think so."

"Can he have some breakfast, too?" asked Mark.

Andrea told him to be quiet, then said to Bridget: "Satan's really a frightful cat. I don't know why we're so fond of him. We went down to the docks one Sunday to look at the ships and Peter bought him off a lascar seaman for sixpence. We're sure there's jungle blood in him."

The colonel pushed back his chair. "Jungle blood, you say? Yes, he's a magnificent beast. Always was rather partial to cats. I'd better let him in and offer him a drink."

A moment later the cat jumped into the room. With a stern expression the colonel placed a saucer of milk in front of it and stroked it gravely. Satan purred loudly.

The ice was breaking. Conversation thereafter flowed more easily. The Morvens had at last become aware that the colonel's manner and the colonel himself were two very different things. Before they took their leave they felt very much at ease and Peter made a charming and spontaneous little gesture by asking the Hallerfelds to visit the cottage some time. This seemed to please the old couple very much.

The colonel was genuinely sorry to say goodbye to the Morvens. On closer inspection they seemed quite sensible; intelligent, resourceful young people, in fact.

Just as they were about to leave, he hurried back into the dining-room and returned with the remains of the ham, which he insisted they take with them to supplement their picnic lunch. And after their ancient, grossly overloaded car had disappeared from sight round the corner, he turned to Bridget and said: "You know, those youngsters have guts."

It was while they were doing the washing-up that the telegraph-boy arrived. Unable to get an answer from the basement flat, he came upstairs and asked the Hallerfelds if they knew where the Morvens could be found. Bridget had their address, having offered to forward their letters, but while she was getting it the colonel persuaded the boy to let him have a look at the telegram in case it concerned some immediate matter over which he could help.

"What does it say?" asked Bridget, coming up behind him.

The colonel looked upset. He said: "This is from the house agents. They're in trouble over that cottage already. Real bad trouble. . . ."

Pear Tree Cottage was a dumpy, half-timbered little building with a fairly large garden which had once been pretty but was now completely overgrown. The interior of the cottage was full of blackened oak and cracked lattice windows; there was a twisting staircase and a really beautiful inglenook fireplace in the long, low sitting-room. The place had considerable charm but, as Andrea had observed, it was in need of repair.

The Morvens arrived shortly before six, their car towed by the removal van. The journey had been punctuated by minor catastrophes: Satan had escaped during the halt for lunch and it had been an awful business catching him again. Mark had been sick. A vase had fallen off the back of the car into the path of a bus just behind. Finally there had been two punctures, and eventually an irreparable breakdown.

They were met at the front gate by Mr. Langridge, the house agent through whom they had bought the cottage; he had been waiting for them for several hours.

"I'm afraid I have some rather disturbing news for you, Mr. Morven," he began. "I sent you a wire yesterday evening but I've subsequently found out it didn't arrive until after you'd left this morning." He paused. "I'm



"I said, 'Can you hear it, Sidney?'"

sorry to say you've been served with a 'Notice to Treat.'"

"Well, now, that's a fine thing," Peter said. "Who am I supposed to treat?"

Mr. Langridge looked gloomy. He said: "I thought you'd be familiar with the term. In your case it simply means that the government want Pear Tree Cottage, and so your property is going to be taken away from you almost at once."

There was a stifled "No!" from Andrea.

Mr. Langridge continued: "There's an army experimental station near here and they're taking another three hundred acres, which includes your land. The notice came through late yesterday afternoon, and as soon as I heard about it I—"

Peter cut him short. "Where is the notice?"

"I expect it's in your letter-box."

Sure enough it was. As Peter read it, he exclaimed with mingled sarcasm and anger: "How cosy! We arrive at our new home and the first letter we get is one telling us we can't live here."

"Of course you have ten days in which to appeal," said Mr. Langridge, "and you will eventually be paid something for the cottage. The government don't expect you to give it away."

"That's decent of them," Peter commented dryly.

"How much will we be paid?" asked Andrea.

"Ah, that's difficult to say."

"Please try to give us some idea."

"The position is this. In a case of compulsory purchase, government inspectors assess the value of the property. Now in my experience they do this very fairly, but they judge it solely and simply as a 'housing unit.'"

"Meaning what, exactly?"

"Meaning, Mr. Morven, that such nebulous attributes as 'charm,' 'old worldliness,' 'beautiful setting' and the like count for nothing. You must face the fact that quite a bit of Pear Tree Cottage's value lies in its charm and attractive setting."

"How much?" Andrea repeated.

Mr. Langridge hesitated. "About a quarter of what you have paid for it. Perhaps a little more. But not very much more."

That it seemed, was the situation. It completely staggered the Morvens. It was not until much later that they came out of their daze and began to face the full realization of their predicament.

"What are we going to do?" Andrea asked as she and Peter went upstairs to bed.

"I suppose we'll fight," Peter answered.

"But we've fought for years. We've done without things, we've scraped and

saved and—and worked ourselves nearly to death to buy this cottage. Fighting's no good, Pete. Look what's happened. The trouble is, there's no room for small people like us in the world today."

As they entered the bedroom she began to cry. . . .

The tragedy which had befallen the Morvens seemed so incomprehensible to the Hallerfelds that at first they thought the telegram must be some sort of cruel practical joke. Then the colonel had telephoned the agents and had learned the full facts. After ringing off he was so angry that he felt quite ill and Bridget had to fetch him a brandy.

"Is there anyone who could help the Morvens?" she asked when he had recovered a little. "Anyone at your club with a bit of influence, Arthur?"

He shook his head. "I've been trying to think. If only one wasn't so out of the swim these days."

"What about Drippy Nuncaton?" she suggested. "I've heard you say he's in the club most evenings and he is an M.P."

The colonel laughed shortly. "Drippy lost his seat in the last election, and I can't say I blame his constituents."

"All the same, dear," Bridget persisted, "I think you ought to go along to the club this evening. You never know, you might meet someone who could help."

"I'll certainly drop in there," the colonel promised.

But the club was rather empty that evening. Drippy was there, as usual, and the colonel thought he might as well buy him a drink.

DRIPPY, a tall, willowy old man with rather prominent features, had been a friend of his since they had been cadets together at the Royal Military College.

While they were sipping their pink gins in the smoking-room, the colonel broached the subject which was uppermost in his mind.

"Look here, Drip," he said, "are you by any chance on friendly terms with the nabobs in the present government?"

"All great friends of mine!" Drippy replied without hesitation.

"Then you may be of some use. I want to get in touch with someone who'll kick up a row over a damn scandal. You know the sort of thing. Questions in the House, chits to the P.M., and all that."

"What's the trouble?"

"Some people I know have just bought a cottage in the country, and it's been pinched by the army—to be precise, an outfit calling itself the Directorate of Pyrotechnical Research."

Drippy grimaced. "Bad luck on your friends," he said. "Though, of course, arbitrary requisitioning and compulsory

purchase are completely justified at the present time by the needs of the nation as a whole."

"Oh, don't be so damned pompous, old boy," the colonel retorted. "I might have known it was a waste of time asking your advice."

"Perhaps it isn't." Drippy lit a cigarette and inhaled deeply. "Pyrotechnical Research, you say? Do you remember a fellow called 'Ferret' Ovington in the regiment? He must have been a subaltern when you were C.O."

"Of course I do. Joined us in Bangalore. Little red-haired chap. Rotten bad horseman—always falling off in the remount ride."

"I had a drink with him a month or so ago," said Drippy casually.

"Well?"

"He happens to be a brass-hat at the War House now—Director-General of Pyrotechnical Research."

"Is he, by Jove?" The colonel banged down his glass. "Thanks, Drip! Never known you be so helpful. I think I'll go and have a word with 'Ferret' Ovington tomorrow."

HE hurried home to tell Bridget the good news, and while they were having supper, he enumerated all the things he was going to say to his ex-subaltern who was now a major-general.

But at first Bridget did not seem as enthusiastic as he had hoped she would be. "Arthur," she said, leaning her elbows on the table. "What I'm going to say now may hurt your feelings but you've got to listen for the sake of the Morvens."

"Eh?" he exclaimed, frowning.

"'Ferret' Ovington will remember you as his C.O. in a crack cavalry regiment when you were handbox smart, and tomorrow it may be rather a shock to him if he sees you—well, looking different."

She broke off, wondering how she could voice her thoughts without hurting her husband too much. It needed a special sort of courage to continue: "I'm worried about your appearance. He'll think to himself: 'This shabby old man is right out of the swim now—he's just another retired colonel without any influence with anyone, and I needn't pay attention to anything he says.' Do you see what I mean, Arthur? And please don't be offended."

The colonel was silent for some moments, then he raised his head and said gruffly: "I suppose I do look a pretty average tramp these days, but there's nothing to be done about it—can't afford a new suit."

"It isn't a question of a new suit—your best blue will look perfectly all right after I've pressed it. But you do need a new shirt, and a new tie and a new bowler hat and a nice smart pair of shoes and—"

He interrupted her. "Look, Bridget, what's the use of talking? You know I can't afford these things."

"You can, dear!" she declared with surprising firmness. "There's nearly sixteen pounds put by for our summer holiday. It'll be well spent if it helps to get the Morvens out of their trouble. Don't you agree?"

After a second's hesitation the colonel nodded slowly. . . .

Andrea was cooking the family's first breakfast in the cottage. Mark was with her. He turned to his father, who had just come through from the living-room.

"Daddy, when are we going to leave?"

"We're staying here till we're thrown out, old boy," Peter replied.

"Good-oh! Daddy, we ought to build a stockade and shoot the attackers when they gallop round it on horses."

The thought of government inspectors whooping round the garden on rakish-looking mounts and brandishing their umbrellas appealed to Peter's sense of humour, and he laughed for the first time since he had arrived at the cottage.

"Not a bad idea!"

"We'll have a smashing fight," said Mark happily.

They had nearly finished breakfast when Mr. Langridge turned up again. He lost no time in giving them the reason for his early call.

"I'm able to place before you an

excellent offer for this property," he announced.

"What d'you mean?" Peter asked. "Anyone who bought it now would be crazy."

"Not necessarily so. You see, Mr. Morven, it's a matter of compensation. Some adjoining property owned by my clients, Benson Estates, is also to be seized and an assessment of its value has already been made by the inspectors. But the position is this: my clients were so dissatisfied with the sum offered them that they got counsel's opinion. Now they've been advised that if they could add your property to theirs they'd have a strong case for demanding a much higher rate of overall compensation based on a reassessment."

"It sounds pretty phoney to me," commented Peter.

MR. LANGRIDGE looked pained. "You must realize that the whole question of payments in cases of this kind is a very intricate one. However, I think all I need add is that my clients can afford to risk substantial sums in obtaining the best legal advice."

"And we can't afford any at all," Andrea said.

"How much d'you think they'd offer us for the cottage?" Peter asked.

"I feel pretty sure they'd go up to half the sum you paid for the property," replied the agent.

Peter gave a snort of disgust. "You can tell them to go to hell."

Andrea exclaimed: "Hey, Pete. Wait a minute! We must talk this over. We might get a few hundred pounds more by selling the cottage now instead of waiting for it to be taken from us."

Mr. Langridge nodded his approval. "Precisely, Mrs. Morven!"

"All right, we'll think about it," said Peter with a sigh.

"I'm sure you will appreciate that there's a certain urgency over the matter, and so I shall take the liberty of instructing my clients' solicitors to prepare a conveyance."

Mr. Langridge moved towards the door, for the expression in Peter's eyes made him slightly nervous. "I shall bring the deed here at six thirty this evening in the hope of obtaining your signature. Good morning to you."

After the agent had gone, Andrea looked at Peter and said: "Well, what do you think?"

"I think they're probably a lot of sharks," Pete answered. "But as we're bound to lose our home in any case, I suppose we may as well let it be snapped up."

At a quarter to five that afternoon the colonel was shown into the office of his former subaltern, whom he had not seen for twenty-five years. It was a very untidy office with several strange pieces of equipment littered about the room and futuristic-looking diagrams piled haphazardly on tables. Major-General Ovington, stout and bald-headed, rose from behind his desk, reflecting that his first C.O. had changed very little in appearance; the old boy was dressed to the nines, just as he always remembered him, and the years had not dimmed that dangerous glint in his eyes.

"How are you, Ferret?" asked the colonel, and as they shook hands he glanced sharply down at Ovington's brass buttons, which perhaps did not shine as brightly as they might have

Spot the Lawbreaker

Somewhere in this scene, the law is being broken. Can you see where? A barrister gives the answer on page 40



DRAWN BY RONALD LAMPITT

done. Ovington did not miss that glance and for a moment he experienced the curious sensation of being a second lieutenant in the orderly room instead of a general in the War Office.

"Very well, thank you, Colonel," he answered. "It's good to see you again."

"Hm! I hope you'll still think so after we've had a talk, Ferret." The colonel looked round the office. "Bit of a mess in here, eh?"

"I'm sorry. I'm afraid there is," Ovington smiled apologetically.

"You know, that's exactly what you said when I inspected your troop-stables before the C-in-C's inspection in Sialkot. Remember?"

"Yes, I think I do." The major-general pulled up a chair. "Do sit down, won't you?"

"Thanks. Now, what I want to talk to you about is a cottage you've pinched near Oxford. It's just been bought by some youngsters I know—in fact, they only moved in yesterday—and I imagine they're pretty cut-up at being served with a 'notice to treat.' Don't you think it's damned rough luck on 'em?"

Ovington looked concerned. "I certainly do. Requisitioning property is usually rough luck on somebody."

"I'd like to help these people, but it's extremely unlikely that I can. If you don't mind waiting a moment, we'll take a look at the area and see how the land lies. But remember, I can't promise a thing."

He pressed a speaker-switch and asked for the map. A pretty W.R.A.C. captain came in with it and spread it out.

"Now this thin red line indicates the

proposed extension of our boundaries," explained Ovington, pointing. "Let me see, where's your friends' cottage?"

"Pear Tree Cottage it's called. Good heavens, there it is, right on the boundary!" exclaimed the colonel.

"Yes. We were led to suppose it was uninhabited and derelict."

"Well, I can assure you it's nothing of the kind. Ferret, this seems to me to be one of those occasions in military history when the 'thin red line' has to make a tactical withdrawal."

"You're right. It does look like a matter for further investigation," agreed Ovington with a slight frown.

"Of course, we should have been put in the picture by the local authorities; I can assure you the very last thing we'd do would be to take someone's home if it could possibly be avoided."

The colonel eyed him stonily. "Then what's your next move?"

"I'll see that immediate action's taken through the appropriate channels, and with any luck your friends should be hearing in a week or so."

THE major-general smiled hopefully at Colonel Hallerfeld. "Satisfied?" he asked.

"No! Why on earth should they be kept in suspense when an obvious blunder has been made? Surely the least you can do is to send them a telegram now, telling them everything's going to be all right?"

"Oh, it isn't as easy as that. Really, you've no idea the number of channels a matter like this has to pass through."

"In that case I won't keep you any

longer, Ferret." The colonel turned towards the hatstand on which his new bowler hung. "I'd hoped we'd be able to settle this matter between ourselves, but now I realize I shall have to take it to a higher level."

Ovington ran a hand over his brow. He looked reproachfully, almost sadly at his old C.O., but there was a hint of admiration in his eyes, too.

"Now hold it, Colonel." He broke into a grin. "You're a hard task-master. I might have guessed you'd never change. Let me see if anything can be done on a priority basis."

As he spoke, he picked up a telephone.

When Mr. Langridge arrived at the cottage that evening, Peter and Andrea sent Mark to play outside, and then Peter turned to the agent.

"We've been for a long walk, talking things over," he said. "And we think we've made up our minds." He hesitated. "I suppose we'll have to accept your offer."

"Very wise of you, if I may say so." Mr. Langridge opened his briefcase and took out a document. "I think you'll find this quite in order."

Peter had read about halfway through the deed when Mark burst into the room. Andrea exclaimed sharply: "Weren't you told to go and play in the garden?"

"But, Mummy—"

"Go on, outside!"

"But Mummy, this has come." Mark held out a buff envelope.

She took it from him, glanced at the name and handed it to Peter. She said bitterly: "I expect it's from another of our well-meaning relations, wishing us all happiness in our new home."

Peter nodded and went on reading the deed. But after a few moments he said: "I suppose we should open the thing."

They read the telegram together, and the sudden transformation of their expressions made Mr. Langridge suspect that they had received some bad news—so far as he was concerned. Peter gave Andrea a hug, and she whispered: "Oh, Pete, I can hardly believe it."

"We ought to have it framed," he told her with a delighted grin. "After all, it can't be often that one gets a wire to say one's home really is one's own." Then he remembered the agent. "Here," he said, "you'd better read this."

Mr. Langridge took the telegram and, after he had read it, tried his best to appear pleased.

"What capital news!" he said stiffly. "May I be the first to congratulate you?"

When he had gone, Peter and Andrea walked out into the garden, where Mark ran to join them.

"Pete," said Andrea, taking her husband's arm, "I'm so full of gratitude I want to do something nice for someone."

"Okay, you can give me a kiss."

"I meant for someone outside the family."

"Anyone special in mind?"

"Well—you'll think me crazy—but it's the Hallerfelds. In the end they were so sweet to us."

"You know, they can't have much of a life, and I got the impression that if we really invited them to stay when we're settled in, they'd come."

"Let's do that," Peter said. "Somehow I'd rather like them to be our first guests."

THE END

A touch of blackmail

Continued from page 20

Jad, she looked like a very fetching and expensive symbol *du tout-Paris*, and the café stirred to her entrance like a schoolroom to a spring day.

While we waited for her father, she explained that she had only been opposed to his marriage for his own good. He wanted to marry Eleonora, she said, simply because he couldn't afford to keep her as his cook any longer, while all the time his health demanded that he eat less, and so it would really be better for them to part.

"Besides," she said, "Papa was once a general. To marry his cook and open a restaurant, of what will that have the air?"

She gave a little sigh, with a sideways

glance at Monsieur le Duc, and said: "All the same, if that's what Papa wants. . . ."

"Parents will be parents," Monsieur le Duc said agreeably.

The General Huvelin and Eleonora came in, a distinguished, white-haired couple. Tea was brought and neglected while a document Dany produced, transferring the amount of seven million francs from her to her father, was studied and declared satisfactory.

"My dear child!" the General Huvelin said.

"Darling Papa!" Dany said, suddenly misty eyed.

"My dear old friend!" the general said to Monsieur le Duc.

"It was nothing," Monsieur le Duc said modestly.

"You will not forget, I beg of you, your agreement to sell me furnishings

from your stock of antiques for my restaurant."

"I shall think of nothing else," Monsieur le Duc assured him.

The General Huvelin turned to Eleonora and took her hands and said: "My gazelle!"

Dany presently departed and Monsieur le Duc and I followed her out, leaving the happy couple together. As we left I reminded him that he had claimed he was not to be cut in on the General Huvelin's loot and asked him, as a point of academic interest, what else he would call his agreement to furnish the general's restaurant with his doubtful antiques.

"Ma foi, that is merely business," Monsieur le Duc said innocently. "He will get the same good value I give to everyone."

Dany, evidently anxious to inspect

her new desk, was waiting on the sidewalk for the *chasseur* to bring around the truckette, which Monsieur le Duc had thrown in free on the deal.

"It would perhaps be better for us not to wait," Monsieur le Duc murmured, hastily raising his stick to hail a taxi.

His uneasiness only relaxed when we were safely on our way, before the truckette appeared.

I said: "You don't mean, by any chance, that she won't find a letter in the desk?"

"No, no. She will find one, *mon ami*. But it is from her husband, you understand. A detail I forgot to mention and an explanation that didn't occur to her."

Monsieur le Duc sighed and raised his eyes to heaven. "Eh bien, sentiment is so often misplaced."

THE END

Is your hair falling out?

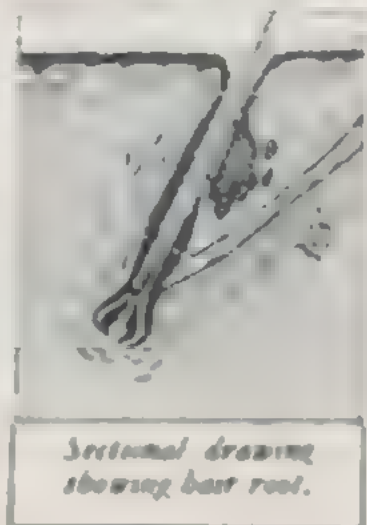
NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT! It's an unpleasant shock—the sudden discovery that your hair is falling out when you brush it. It's also a timely warning. Don't ignore this warning if you want to keep a healthy head of hair. Act now, before the condition becomes more serious. But before you can give your hair the proper care it needs it is important that you should know a little about it first.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HAIR?

Here are some questions often asked about hair. The answers will help you decide how your hair health can best be maintained.

Q What is the life of a hair?

Hair lives from 2 to 6 years. Then it comes away from the root, or papilla, and is replaced by a new hair—or a new papilla may be formed. But if the papilla dies or is not replaced the hair will *never* grow again. Heavy loss of hair may mean the roots are dying from lack of nourishment, for the hair needs proteins in the same way as other living cells in the body.



Q How is hair nourished?

Hair gets its nourishment from proteins in the form of amino-acids. No less than 18 of these amino-acids are essential for healthy hair growth. But many of them also play a vital part elsewhere in the body so when there is a shortage of amino-acids for every need, the hair is often the first to go short. In this case an emergency measure of amino-acids must be provided from outside the body.

After years of original research Silvikrin Laboratories produced a combination of these 18 amino-acids in lotion form which can be massaged into the scalp providing the hair roots with their natural food. This biochemical treatment is called Pure Silvikrin.

Q How often should hair be washed?

This depends largely on the type of hair. If your hair is naturally dry, very frequent shampooing may be inadvisable. Once a week should be often enough. If your scalp is greasy, then you should shampoo more frequently. An exceptionally greasy scalp (caused by over-activity of the sebaceous glands) can result in serious thinning of the hair unless treated in time. The scalp must be kept scrupulously clean and the hair roots provided with the amino-acids needed for building hair. Pure Silvikrin, as you know, contains all 18 amino-acids.

DO YOU KNOW that at the Silvikrin Laboratories, which are entirely devoted to the study of the hair's needs, chemists have proved conclusively that amino-acids can pass from the surface of the skin and become part of the protein of living hair? Working in these specially equipped laboratories, Silvikrin chemists are continually finding new ways in which hair health can be improved by the use of Pure Silvikrin. Remember Pure Silvikrin is a biochemical treatment. Persevering use is *essential*. For 12.3d. you get a month's supply. Buy a bottle today—you will be taking a really positive step towards lasting hair health.



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'Pretty good. The hair on my beard sticks out in all directions — without rhyme or reason.'

'Everybody's does — that's why Rotary Action is so essential. Another thing — the rim of the shaving head is slightly raised, so when you hold it against your face it stretches your skin — and you shave the hairs right down close.'

'Very ingenious! May I have a go?'

'As it's my Guest Night, Eric, you may.'



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Box of tricks with big ears

Continued from page 27

photography. The Duke of Edinburgh, Lord Beaverbrook, Sir Compton Mackenzie, Alec Guinness, Sir John Gielgud and people in every branch of public life use tape to record speeches, acts, songs, or official events.

Johnson himself is a confirmed user of his machine. Suffering from insomnia, he once consulted a hypnotist. As visits multiplied, he recorded the hypnotist's talk on tape. "Now," he says, "I have got it by my bedside. Every night I listen to this chap talking about waves lapping on the beach and I am sound asleep in five minutes."

Johnson recalls that in the early days his firm concentrated on the professional man, the singer, the actor or speaker for whom a tape recorder is essential. He plugged the slogan "Achieve perfection before the performance." "Then, as our machines came over from Germany in greater numbers and the organization expanded, we went to the man in the street: for him, the recorder is the source of a whole family album of sound memories."

Every dealer offering to stock tape recorders was given a special demonstration tape, produced and edited by the firm's promotion manager, John Ridley. Like most tape recorder owners, Ridley is always experimenting and he finds that often his machine opens doors for him.

When his car broke down during a motoring holiday in France two years ago, he knocked up a garage mechanic and recorded the man's grumbles, immediately playing them back to him. Immensely amused, the mechanic woke

CONVERSATION—4

Speech was given to man to disguise his thoughts.

Talleyrand

up his wife, then his children and his neighbours.

"At six a.m.," says Ridley, "he was still working on the car and we had the entire village taking part in an impromptu recording."

Sound experts agree that the tape recorder is one of the most faithful recording instruments ever produced. The tape, a plastic acetate, is almost everlasting and, since there is no needle, recording and playback noises are almost non-existent. Its sensitivity has become proverbial: unlike the human ear, which can pick up sounds with an audio-frequency of 10 to 20,000 cycles, some tape recorders could reach the 100,000 cycles mark.

They can record such sounds as the "silent dog whistle," the extremely high-frequency noise which only certain animals can hear. Unlike the human ear, the tape recorder is unselective: it picks up all sounds indiscriminately.

Many people are wary of the tape recorder's eavesdropping propensities. Says one salesman: "There is a certain '1984' feeling about a tape recorder. Some people always fear that their words will be taken down and used against them, and distrust the machine." When a local council in the Midlands recently used a tape recorder to interview applicants for a job, three out of five refused to speak in front of the microphone.

Tape recorders have been successfully used as court reporters in Northern Ireland, and tape evidence has been accepted in divorce and other court cases in the United States. But to date only two British judges have accepted evidence based on tape recordings. Experts believe that legal uses will have to be restricted since tape can very easily be edited with scissors and paste.

Tape recorders also provide powers for experts in other fields. Several manufacturers market a small oscillation coil, which, stuck to the base of a telephone receiver by a rubber suction

cup, records the whole of the conversation unknown to the distant party.

At least one firm in Britain uses a tape recorder to cut its telephone bills by forty per cent: with two headquarters and frequent calls of a routine nature, officials at one end record their speech on a tape running at normal speed. The call is then booked, the tape recorder started at twice the normal speed and its sounds received at the other end. They are then played back at dictation speed.

Johnson, an imaginative man for whom the tape recorder holds endless fascination, foresees the production in the very near future of entire libraries of tape recordings containing, say, Emlyn Williams's Dickens readings and children's bedtime stories. He also visualizes a whole new range of teaching aids.

The principle of the recording of sound on magnetized tape—similar to the schoolboy's trick of making iron filings spread into a pattern on a sheet of paper by moving a magnet—was first put into effect by a Danish scientist fifty years ago. But only when great progress was made in the plastics industry during the second World War did German and American scientists simultaneously make the first practical tape recorders.

Since then, recorders have been greatly reduced in size and weight and most machines can now be used on mains or batteries. Experts predict the early appearance of tape recorders working on transistors which may bring even the most elaborate recorder down to the size of a cigar box.

Johnson and other British experts believe that in four or five years' time it will be possible to hire a camera—about eighteen inches long, five inches wide and eight inches deep—with which the average man will be able to record a moving picture on tape only.

By-passing pictures on tape, other tape recorder technicians are now within sight of producing experimental "feelies" on tape. Discovering that when experiencing emotions the human mind emits certain electrical frequencies—strong, forceful emotions being higher in frequency than, say, love, humour or pleasure—they have found that it is possible to record these emotion impulses on tape.

If recordings are played back with terminals attached to various parts of the head, the same emotions can be "experienced" by the subject. One scientist already sees *Romeo And Juliet* being thus enjoyed.

Johnson believes that this development will certainly be perfected during the lifetime of the present generation, but he adds: "I can't see a very great commercial application of it."

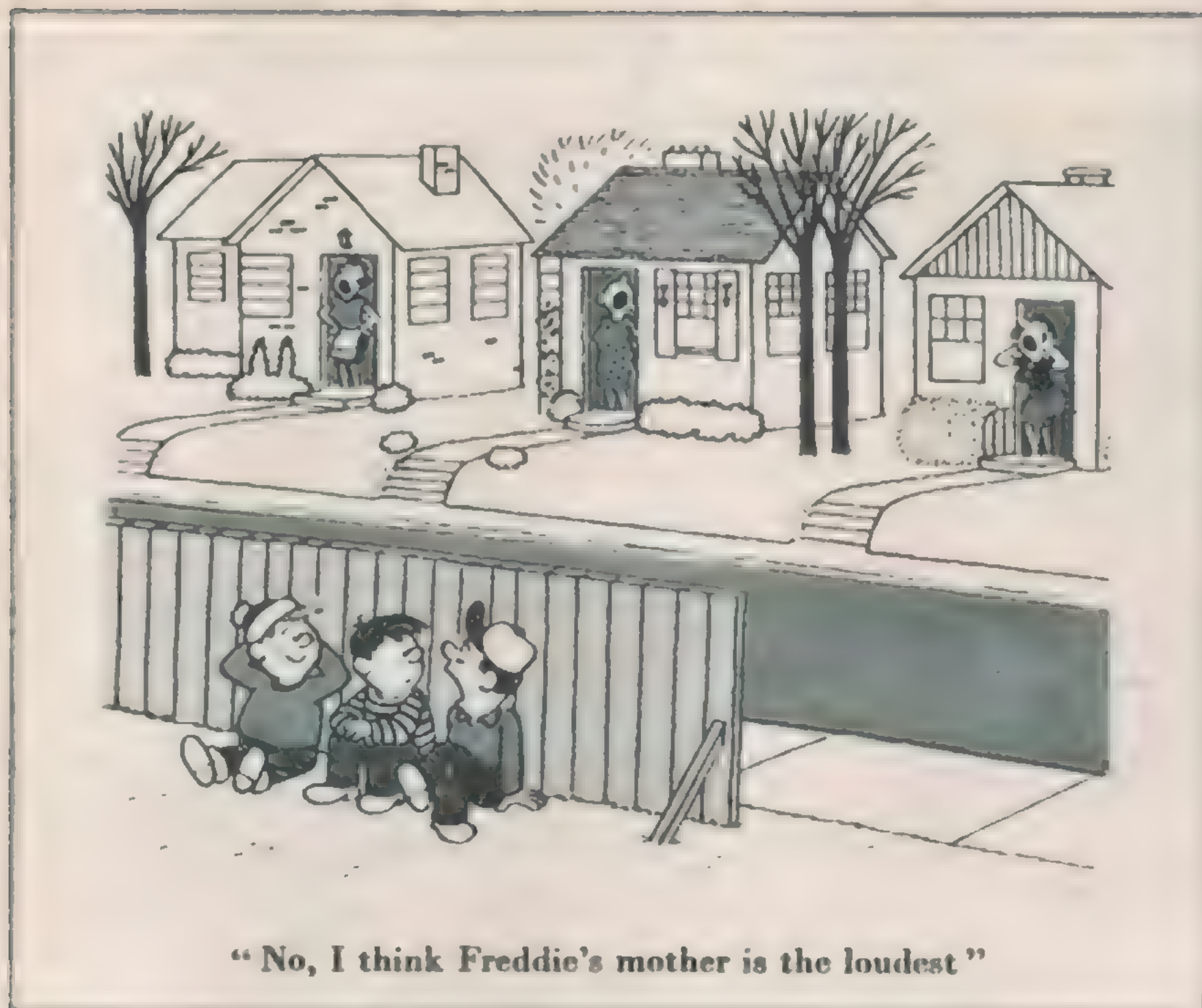
"I am prepared to experience the Immortal Bard's passions but if, going through the Hornblower stories, for instance, I am expected to participate, however vicariously, in such scenes as the amputation of a limb, the cat o' nine tails or the slicing of a sabre cut, please count me out." THE END

Spot the Lawbreaker

See page 38



It is illegal to repair a car in the street if it causes annoyance to others. The motorist can be fined up to £2, in London under the Metropolitan Police Act of 1839, elsewhere under the Town Police Clauses Act of 1847. The same applies to a mechanic doing repairs. The only defence, says a barrister-at-law, is that the car has broken down on that spot.



Shadow of the moon

Continued from page 26

yards from the shelter, his body jack-knifed with pain and his breathing harshly audible above the steady patter of the rain.

There followed a nightmare interval of days and nights—none of them could have said how many. It seemed like a month, but was probably no more than three days. During that time Alex's body was torn and burned and wasted with dysentery and raging fever, and it seemed to Winter that he could not live.

She stayed with him day and night, doing everything that it was possible to do for him, endlessly and tirelessly; holding his head on her lap, forcing the brandy and opium that were the only medicines they possessed down his parched throat, feeding him with rice-water, listening to him rave when the fever mounted.

Lou kept away, for fear of carrying the infection to the baby, who wailed endlessly and heartbreakingly, and vomited up the rice-water and the thin gruel that Lou made with flour and coarse country sugar. And the supplies of even those were running low.

"She will die without milk," said Lou, wild-eyed and desperate. "She must have proper food—she must!"

Winter did not hear her. She watched Alex's haggard, burnt-out face and dry, cracked lips, and her thoughts were as desperate as Lou's. She did not even notice when Lou went away, and it was only when she found that there was no fire lit that she realized that Lou and the baby had gone. Even then she imagined they could not be far away.

That day Alex opened eyes that were no longer clouded and blind with pain. He spoke with a palpable effort. He said in a voice that was barely a whisper: "How long?"

"I don't know," Winter said. "Days. Don't talk."

"I shall be all right now," said Alex. He closed his eyes and slept with his head in her lap.

Winter slept, too, her head thrown back against the tree trunk behind her. When she heard voices and felt a hand shake her, she thought it was Lou.

But it was not Lou. It was a party of men armed with lathis and old-fashioned muskets.

"These are not *sahib-log*," said one of the men scornfully. "They are but the *noker-log* of the mem."

But one of them peered closer and said: "Nay, they have *Angresi* blood in them at least. We will take them. Up, thou!" The speaker kicked Alex.

Winter said furiously, in the vernacular: "Let be! Cannot you see he is sick?"

The tone and the quality of the Hindustani she used gave the men

pause, and they looked at her doubtfully. One of them said uncertainly: "Of what city art thou?"

"Of Lucknow," said Winter without hesitation. "Of the household of Ameera Begum, wife of Walayat Shah, who is my cousin and lives in the Gulab Mahal by the mosque of Sayid Hussain. This man is of Persia, and my—my husband."

The men observed her, owl-eyed, and consulted in whispers. Winter heard one say: "What matter? The order is for all to be sent to Pari. Send these also."

The men rifled the contents of the shelter in which Lou and the baby had lived, taking the revolvers and the shotgun and anything else they could find. Ten minutes later they moved off through the jungle, Winter and Alex with them.

Alex, helped to his feet, was unable to stand without support, let alone walk, and they used the roof of the shelter to carry him. It took them surprisingly little time to reach the road. A bullock cart was waiting there, and in it Lou Cottar, white faced and haggard, sat clutching the baby.

She stared at Winter and Alex in horror and said hoarsely: "I didn't mean—I didn't know this would happen. I thought I might find a village where I could get milk. And—and they did help me. They were kind. I didn't realize they would go back to see if there was anyone else."

Her voice choked and stopped and Winter said: "It's all right, Lou." Then they were thrust into the cart and jolted away down the long, uneven road towards Pari. . . .

It was dark by the time the captives reached the little walled town. They were taken out and hustled across a dark courtyard and into a long, low-ceilinged room lit by a single guttering cresset. An iron bar clanged into place behind them, and someone at the far end of the room stood up in the shadows beyond the circle of light and said hoarsely and incredulously: "Mrs. Barton!"

Winter was on her knees beside Alex, and now she looked up, startled, blinking a little in the dim light that seemed dazzling after the darkness outside, as faces that she knew separated themselves from the shadows: Captain Garrowby; Dr. O'Dwyer; Mrs. Hossack. . . .

Mrs. Hossack clutched at Lou Cottar and wept, and Captain Garrowby said: "Mrs. Barton!—Mrs. Cottar! How did you . . . ? We thought you must all be dead. We thought that we were the only ones who had got away. Who is that with you?" He lifted the lamp: "Good God! It's Randall!"

"Only just," said Alex in a whisper. "Hullo Garrowby. How did you—get out?"

There were *charpoy*s in the room, six

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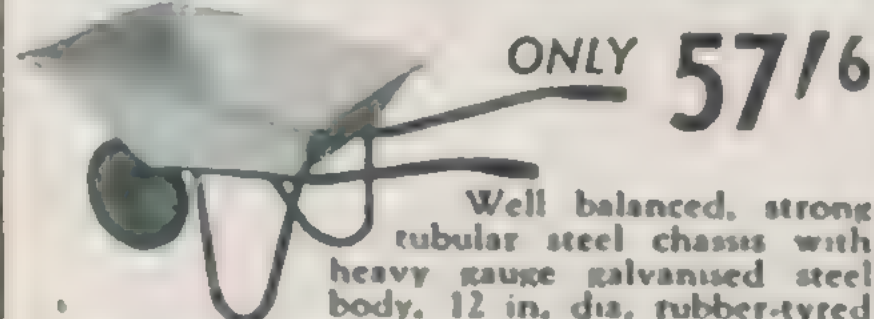
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EP49 56

of them, placed end to end along the walls. Captain Garrowby and Dr. O'Dwyer lifted Alex on to one of them, and he lay there and listened to the story of another escape.

The Garrowbys and Doctor and Mrs. O'Dwyer and Mrs. Hossack and her four children had not been to the Residency, and so escaped the massacre. They had all made for the bridge and crossed it at least two hours before Alex and Niaz reached it.

They said no word at the bridge of the panic in Lunjore, for fear of being stopped, but at Pari they were attacked by a mob which included mutinous sepoys from the disbanded 7th Regiment.

The coachman and Captain Garrowby's gardener, who were with them, stood off the mob for a few minutes and paid for their loyalty with their lives. But in those few minutes the party turned and drove back furiously the way they had come, and took to the jungle.

One of the Hossack children was killed and Captain Garrowby and Mrs. O'Dwyer were wounded in the firing. Mrs. O'Dwyer died two days later. The others wandered in the jungle, living on roots and berries. First one and then another of the two elder Hossack children died, and later Mrs. Garrowby died of heat stroke and exhaustion.

Captain Garrowby and the doctor, with Mrs. Hossack and her remaining child—a baby of six months—were driven to ask help at a village on the outskirts of Pari, and the villagers took them in and treated them kindly. But three days ago they had been put into a covered cart and brought to this house. They had been given food, and had not been ill-used, but the atmosphere and the attitude of their jailors was not reassuring.

Other captives had arrived on the following day: the Rev. Chester Dobbie, Mr. Climpson and Miss Keir—sole survivors of a party of fifteen Europeans who had hoped to escape from Oudh and had been attacked at a village five miles away.

Winter paid no attention to the recital of escape and misery. She went straight to Dr. O'Dwyer and pulled him across the room to Alex, and after that she only watched his face and listened to what he said.

"He'll do," said Dr. O'Dwyer reassuringly. And then a native woman brought coarse food and a bowl of fresh milk, and Lou fed the baby and told the story of the last weeks.

Then the voices and the faces and the heat of the low-ceilinged room mixed and melted together and Winter fell asleep and did not stir or waken until the sun was high in the sky. . . .

Three slow days passed before news from Lucknow trickled into Pari. It was news that dismayed the captives, put heart into the rabble and frightened the Talukdar, the ruler of Pari, into ridding himself, Pilate-wise, of the responsibility of the fugitive Europeans whom he was holding captive.

Sir Henry Lawrence was dead. He had been killed in the beleaguered Residency at Lucknow, and all over India men heard the news with a catch of the breath.

THE Talukdar wavered no longer, and hastened to rid himself of the haggard band of British before they were murdered by the mob under circumstances that might involve him in trouble, in the event—which now appeared less likely—of the hell-born defeating the insurgents and regaining power.

He sent in more and better food, permitted the services of a barber, allowed the women facilities for the washing and mending of clothes. Then, having impressed his excellent intentions upon them, he had them hurried by night into covered carts such as *purdah* women travel in, so that they might not be seen, and sent them off under guard.

The four days and nights that followed their departure from Pari were a horror that equalled anything that Winter and Lou had yet endured. The carts made slow progress, for the heavy rains had turned the roads into quagmires, and the torrential downpour



soaked through the inadequate covering and drenched the huddled occupants.

They heard no news in those days, and did not know that on one of them the last survivors of the Cawnpore garrison had died and, with them, Sophie Abuthnot.

When the guns of the British advance could be heard in Cawnpore, Nan Dundoo Pant had heard in them the bitter knell of his hopes. All the evil fury and hate of which he was capable was let loose on the only victims that remained in his hands—the two hundred exhausted, hopeless, helpless women and children who were herded like animals in one small building.

It took all day to kill them, and when the new day dawned the butchers dragged out the corpses and flung them into a well outside the house.

Half India shuddered in horror and drew back, for that massacre caused many men—who would have fought the British to the bitter end to lay down their arms.

Towards the end of the journey from Pari, Winter dropped into unconsciousness. The lack of food and sleep, the constant jolting of the cart, and the weeks of strain and privation she had endured, at last overwhelmed her.

She was dimly aware that the cart was passing through crowded streets. Lights and voices and noise pressed about it and somewhere guns were firing; guns and a ceaseless crackle of musketry. Then the noises fell away and she drifted into darkness. . . .

When she awoke she was lying on a low bed. It was still dark, but the greying sky beyond the window gave enough light to show the outline of the room. She felt clean, and cooler than she had felt for a very long time.

The light brightened slowly, turning from the first faint glimmer of dawn to the clear glow that precedes the sunrise.

She felt but did not see the dazzling rim of the sun lift above the edge of the far horizon. Then the glow beyond her closed eyes brightened and she saw the rose-pink sky and the formal patterns of leaves and flowers and birds—the vision that had glowed before her mind's eye for so many cold years.

Then it had been out of reach, like the moon. But now it was real. This was the Rose Palace of her happy childhood days, the Gulab Mahal. . . .

After a while she rose and walked slowly about the room in a waking dream, running her hands over the familiar flower patterns, caressing the painted birds and beasts. She did not know that this was the room in which she had been born and in which her mother had died. She only knew that every foot of it was familiar and beloved.

She did not know how she had come there, or that it was the Talukdar of Pari's determination to play safe that had been responsible.

Winter was walking back to the bed when the heavy curtain over the doorway rustled and lifted. She turned at the sound and saw that it was her cousin Ameera. They clung to each other and wept and did not speak for a long time.

And then Ameera held Winter off at arms' length and looked at her. "It

is true then," Ameera said. "I thought it was a dream. So thou hast come home—but in no auspicious hour. Dost thou know that I have spent the night upon my knees before my husband, begging for thy life and for the lives of those with thee?"

"He would have turned all from the door, but Hamida was in the courtyard and she saw thee and ran to me. At first I did not believe; and then I knew that it could be no chance that brought thee here."

"This surely was written. For hadst thou come two days ago, or even one, I could not have saved thee. My husband was hot against thy people and he hates them still and would rid himself of all whom the Talukdar of Pari sent hither. But because of the word that was brought from Cawnpore of the evil that has been done there, he will hold his hand."

All the captives from Pari arrived at the Gulab Mahal, though they had been brought for safety's sake by different roads. And Walayat Shah, who at first refused to take the responsibility of sheltering men whom he would gladly have seen dead, listening to Ameera's pleading and remembered Cawnpore.

They were given rooms in a secluded wing of the Rose Palace, adjoining the *zenana* quarters.

The rooms were hot and cramped, but the one on the ground floor, allotted to Lou, Mrs. Hossack, Miss Keir and the two children, gave on to a large private garden that was separated from the rest of the gardens by a high wall and was full of orange and *loquat* trees and a tangle of roses and jasmine.

Four of the men shared a room immediately above it, and above that again, reached by a steep, narrow stair, was an isolated square of roof, screened from the view of the *zenana* roofs by a wall and a pavilion that

THE HOME DECORATORS' COMPETITION

The winners of the Home Decorators' Competition which appeared in JOHN BULL dated June 16 are

Mrs. I. ALLEN
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The prize of £500 will be shared, each receiving £250

The winning entry agreed by the Judges was:

- No. 2. Fill all cracks.
- No. 6. Keeping brushes in water.
- No. 9. Make ladder safe.
- No. 12. Paint before puttying.
- No. 14. Painting a ceiling.
- No. 15. Paper from window.
- No. 16. Pasting wallpaper.
- No. 18. Remove all rust.
- No. 22. Stripping room of furniture.
- No. 24. Wash old whitewash.

enclosed one end of it. Here they had put Alex, whom, as a sick man, it had been thought best to segregate from the others.

Three of the most trusted servants of the household were put in charge of the *Feringhees*, who were given native dress to wear in place of their own ragged garments, and were not permitted to go even into the secluded garden except between sunset and dawn.

The continuous rattle of musketry, punctuated by the boom of guns, came clearly to their ears all day and for a large part of every night, and was a continual reminder to them that they were not the only British in Lucknow. They could hear the crash of exploding mines as the mutineers tunnelled towards the defences of the Residency, and the stubborn, beleaguered garrison ran out counter-mines and blew up their galleries.

And, whenever there was a lull in the firing, they shuddered and waited and prayed for it to begin again, fearing that silence might mean that the Residency had fallen at last. . . .

Alex made one unexpected friend at the Gulab Mahal—Dasim Ali, Ameera's great-uncle. Dasim Ali paid frequent visits to Alex's roof top, and they discussed a multitude of subjects from an angle that would not have occurred to the average Westerner.

Winter, too, made friends in the Gulab Mahal. She was the only one who went freely to the women's quarters. Dressed in Ameera's clothes, wearing Ameera's jewels, her blue-black hair in a heavy plait and her slim feet bare or in a pair of Ameera's flat, curl-toed slippers, she would have passed anywhere as an Indian woman of good family; or a girl from the hills, where women's skins are fairer than in the plains.

A good deal of her time she spent with Alex. His illness had brought a subtle change in their relationship. During their days at the *Hirren Minar* there had been moments when the antagonism, which had lain between them since their first meeting at Ware, seemed dormant rather than at an end. But no man could have let a woman do for him the things Winter had done for Alex, without losing some small part of his personal entity and independence.

BOTH of them realized this, and the result was a closer, more satisfying companionship than either would once have believed possible. They could sit for hours now without speaking, happy in the knowledge that they were together.

Alex recovered reasonably quickly from his illness, but the fever had an unpleasant habit of returning at unexpected intervals. The other refugees came up to his roof most evenings, as it was thought to be safer for them there than in the gardens. But he was happiest when alone with Winter.

There were only three women now—four, if one counted Lottie's daughter. Miss Keir never recovered from the nightmare journey in the covered cart. She lingered on for a few days and died one hot night within a week of their arrival at the Gulab Mahal.

The Reverend Chester Dobbie conducted a short funeral service, and it was the memory of this that started Winter thinking along new lines. It had not dawned on her previously that there was a clergyman available who was qualified to perform Holy Offices—who could conduct not only funerals but marriages.

Alex was suffering one of his periodic bouts of fever when the idea came to her. They were alone on the roof. Alex was lying on his bed, wearing only a scanty loincloth, and his body looked painfully thin and very brown against the pale-coloured *resai* that did duty as a mattress.

Winter looked at him and realized how deeply she loved him. They had gone through so much together that there was no need for pretensions or false modesty between them. She took his hand, gripping it tightly.

"Alex," she said, "will you marry me?"

To be concluded next week

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Woman doctor in the veiled city

Continued from page 17

pass between two valleys. The city is strung out along a narrow street lined with small houses. At the southern end is a magnificent mountain, the summit of which is often covered with snow and affords a glimpse of the Red Sea.

Manaha is a wealthy city whose merchants deal in coffee. The women dress like frumps, but the men garb themselves in splendour. In place of shirts, they often wear long-sleeved boleros. The material is either black satin or cloth with bright vertical stripes of yellow, green or red, and these tight-fitting, vivid garments yawn across their smooth-skinned, muscular chests.

At daybreak, peasants danced under my windows. Then I received calls from important people of the city, including the local judge and the doctor. Finally, a messenger came to announce that the governor was expecting me at an official reception.

It took place in a square outside the school. The huge crowd was composed entirely of men. The governor, surrounded by nobles, was seated at the top of a large flight of steps. He welcomed me with great courtesy. The robes, scarves, and turbans of those around him made a kaleidoscope of glowing colour. We exchanged compliments—and I was astonished to learn that he had once spent several weeks in Paris.

The salaams over, the speeches began. Three groups of schoolchildren advanced to the foot of the steps escorted by their teachers. Each group recited speeches to God, then to the Imam, to the governor, and lastly to the worthy French doctor. At the end, the boys danced, and the spectators discussed animatedly the various performances.

Three days later, I set out for Sana, delighted with the success of my adventure and unrepentant.

A friend was waiting for us with a car at Souk el Kamis, a nearby village. In one afternoon we covered as much ground as I had done in two days with my horse. Only when we arrived in Sana after a rip-roaring, breathless journey up and down precipitous mountain paths did the driver tell me that he had no brakes.

THE next time I left Sana, it was in a jeep at dawn. The daughter of the governor of Kibs, a town south-east of the capital, was seriously ill.

I took with me the governor, who was living in Sana, and Abdou. We were halfway there when a horseman came galloping up.

"It's not worth your trouble," he shouted. "She is nearly dead." But I decided to continue.

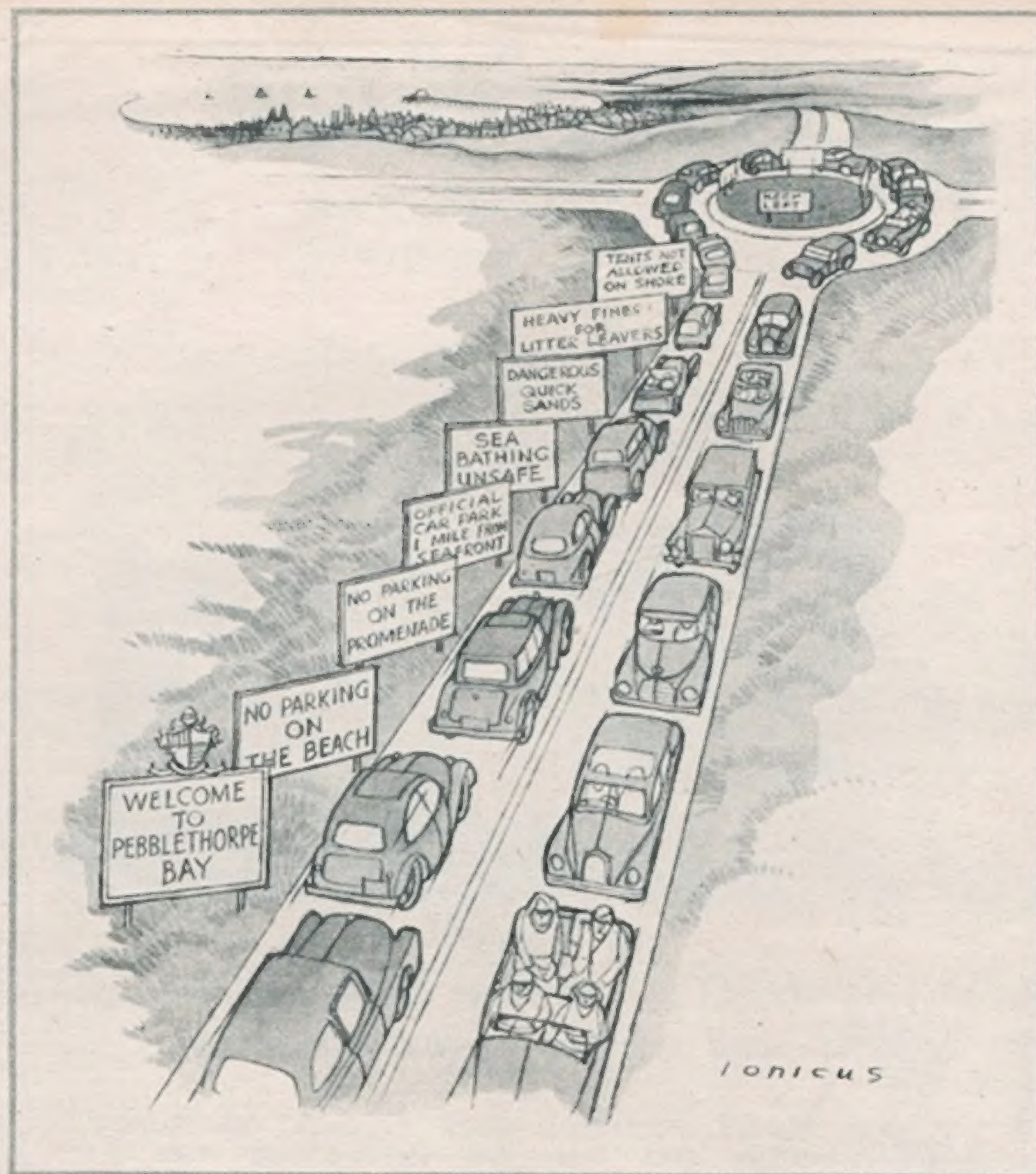
The journey took eight hours, and when we arrived the chief citizens—dressed in their best clothes—were waiting to greet us.

The governor, however, flew into a rage because the entrance to the town was littered with stones. The reception committee ran forward to clear his path.

When we were able to move on, I hurried to the girl's bedside—but it was too late. An hour later she died.

Soon it was July and the upper middle-class of Sana began leaving the city for their country houses. They were taking all their furniture with them, and the streets were full of overburdened camels, plodding along with jingling bells round their necks. Outside the city, the first crop of grain was being harvested, and the second being sown. Trestles had been set up in the fields so that children, protected from the sun by awnings, could stand and keep watch. Their job was to frighten away birds.

The chief grain harvest in the Yemen takes place in September. Men and women go through the fields, cutting off the ears. A few weeks later, when the straw is dry and golden, it is



mowed; later still, the roots are torn up and used as fuel.

The ears are taken to threshing-floors and left to dry. Then twenty or more men, working in a line and armed with staves, do the threshing. Drummers help by keeping up a muffled rhythm, so that the event becomes a kind of ceremony. Women winnow the grain, using simple fans, and when the grain is clean everybody comes to receive a winter supply in proportion to the amount of ears delivered.

My year in the Yemen enabled me to see the complete cycle of the seasons. October, November and December are the dry months, and the fruit trees lose their leaves. In January, night frosts kill most of the flowers in the gardens. In the mornings, children amuse themselves by trailing icicles on bits of string; in the evenings, the sun sets at about five. Each day, though, it grows warmer, and towards the end of the month the fruit trees are in bloom.

In February and March the dust is at its worst. Then the long-awaited rains come.

During my stay, the festival of

CONVERSATION—5

Many can argue, not many converse.

A. B. Alcott

Ramadan, when everyone fasts, fell in June. It is awaited with mixed sentiments. It is an ordeal, but it alters the normal routine of life and the change is not unwelcome. From dawn to sunset, nobody eats or smokes. Everything slows down. In the mornings, the streets are empty, shops are closed, and the hospital is deserted by patients, who refuse treatment.

In the afternoons, Sana begins to reawaken. A cannon shot ends the fast. Immediately, people begin to rush about, drinking at fountains and bringing out cigarettes and food, the first morsel of which is always shared with whoever happens to be near at that moment.

On Ramadan evenings, the meals are banquets; and the celebrations continue into the early hours. A steady

murmur of prayer arises from the mosques, where men read the Koran all night.

Just before sunrise, a second meal is eaten, but most people fall asleep while waiting for it. Therefore, there are "knockers-up" who tour the streets.

At about 4 a.m. I used to hear one of them beating on my neighbour's door. "Ahmed!" he would cry. "It is time to eat. The cannon will sound in ten minutes."

Hastily Ahmed gobbled his meal, which had been prepared in readiness, said his first prayer—and went back to sleep until noon.

All the men I knew in Sana lost pounds during Ramadan and waited impatiently for the Eid el Serir—the "Little Holiday"—which brings it to an end.

The Eid el Serir is celebrated with public prayers in an open-air mosque north of the city. The mosque is an enclosed square, the sides of which are a hundred yards long, and men enter through special gates which at other times are sealed with masonry. Prayers are led by the Imam, or failing him, by the viceroy, from a raised pulpit.

The Eid el Kebir—or "Great Holiday"—comes two months after Ramadan. Commemorating the sacrifice of Abraham and marking the end of the Arab year, the ten days of prayers, parades and general festivities end with a curious ceremony six miles from Sana. Thousands of men bathe in rain-water pools, made in ancient times, and then they join large organized circles of dancers. The ceremony is supposed to coincide with the return of pilgrims from Mecca, but when I was in the Yemen the pilgrimage had been cancelled because of an epidemic of plague on the Saudi-Arabian frontier.

Whenever possible, marriages take place during the Eid el Kebir. In the Yemen, boys are considered ready for marriage at the age of fourteen or fifteen, and the newspaper in Sana once published a royal decree ordering compulsory marriages to save youths from the temptations of debauchery. My hospital's male nurses commented upon this bitterly, for they were too poorly paid to be able to take wives. Later this decree was rescinded.

Getting married in the Yemen, land of the Queen of Sheba, is expensive for a man. The husband must settle a

fixed sum upon his wife and it becomes her personal property. He must pay the same amount if he wants a divorce.

A woman of the lower classes, aged twenty and once married, costs only £5, and £5 more for a divorce, whereas the price of a fourteen-year-old virgin is £12 10s. and £12 10s. for a divorce. Women from well-to-do families may be worth £75, and if the husband is of high degree he may be obliged to pay as much as £200.

Weddings take on a great importance because they make pleasant diversions in the humdrum existence of the average Yemenite. The moment the contract has been signed, songs are sung in the streets outside the couple's homes.

The day before the wedding, the future bride and groom hire separate Turkish baths and go to bathe with all their friends.

The ceremony itself takes place at night. Surrounded by his friends, the groom goes to the mosque for six o'clock prayers. Then he returns home, carrying a sabre on his left shoulder and wearing a ceremonial cloak which he generally borrows from the richest of his friends. If it is his first marriage, he keeps his face uncovered, and if it is his second, an upturned corner of the cloak hides his right eye. For a third marriage or more, he wears a kind of hood over both eyes.

Men of the bridegroom's family accompany him, firing squibs and waving lights to frighten away evil spirits. The eldest relative leads the procession and occasionally halts it so that the men may dance. On reaching the house where the ceremony is to be held, everyone dines and waits for the bride.

The bride, meanwhile, has been getting ready at her home. She is dressed in a long gown of cloth of gold with wide sleeves, and as many necklaces as possible. She wears a high wicker cap covered with black cloth, on which is pinned a crown of jewels and flowers. Then her face is painted, and she is covered from head to foot by an enormous veil.

HER journey to her husband is made at 11 p.m., and, if possible, by carriage. My own was often borrowed for this purpose. Beside the young girl rides a male relative. Other relatives accompany the carriage with songs, dances, torches and squibs.

Women do not join the procession, but hurry to the house of the groom's family.

The bride halts before her new house while an egg—a symbol of fertility—is broken on the threshold. The husband remains in his place, but all his friends go to meet the young girl, who slowly mounts the stairs amid songs of welcome. After she has been led into the harem, where the women are waiting, the men go back to their own gathering in another room.

On several occasions I had the privilege of going back and forth between the two groups at wedding ceremonies. In lower-class harems the evening spent by the women was often full of gusto. Old women served as entertainers, and some of them were so popular that their services had to be booked far in advance.

One of them was a fine comedienne. Disguised as a man and assisted by a leading lady, she portrayed a man who had slaughtered a sheep and wished to give the best meat to his sweetheart, but was too carefully watched by his wife, and then showed a man who wished to go to Mecca for a holiday, but whose wife made a frightful row.

At last, the great moment arrives when the bride is presented to the bridegroom. She squats on the floor, entirely covered by her veil, and attended by only two or three female relatives. The husband is summoned. He enters, quickly approaches, raises the veil, places one foot upon his wife's foot, and his hand upon her forehead. While she keeps her eyes closed, he murmurs a prayer. As soon as he has finished, he releases her and she opens her eyes to look at him, but is not permitted to smile or speak. The young man goes back to his

friends. The reception ends very late, and the newly-weds are left in private.

The next day the last part of the wedding celebration occurs—simultaneous parties for both families. The wife wears her finest clothes and is allowed to smile and talk.

The wedding gown is then returned to the owner—few Yemenites can afford their own gowns—and everything is over.

It is customary for the son of a wealthy family to be married at a tender age to an older woman, whom he later divorces. This is a quiet marriage, intended to dissuade a hot-headed youth from running wild in the city.

But the first marriage of a young girl is always an occasion for great ceremony. Sometimes the bride is only eleven or twelve, and goes immediately to live with her husband.

Is it a crime to marry a little girl? Many of my closest friends in Sana had been married as children. I never found them the worse for it.

And what are the young couple's chances of happiness? Divorce is common in the Yemen when wives do not produce children. All a husband need do to obtain a divorce is to pay the agreed forfeit. The woman goes back to live with a male relative, who tries to get her remarried as rapidly as possible. When a wife seeks a divorce, however, she has to prove her husband's wrongs—such as excessive meanness with the housekeeping money.

On the other hand, a marriage between a couple with children is practically indissoluble. The father loves his children too much to leave them or to deprive them of their mother. The only thing the wife has to look out for is the arrival of other wives.

The Koran permits a maximum of four wives, but this number is rarely attained. The ideal household for a man burdened with age, money, and wisdom is composed of a wife as old as himself for conversation, a robust middle-aged wife for running the home, and a young wife who might bestow upon him the glory of one last child.

If, by misfortune, wives get on badly, the husband sends away the childless ones. If all of them are mothers, a sufficiently rich husband sets them up in separate establishments; a poor one has to resign himself to a life of misery. I knew one man who was obliged to live with his brother most of the time.

Generally, though, wives seem to get along well together and have a good time. In the morning, they are eager for the man to leave the house, and his return in the evening imposes a restraint.

BEFORE I left the Yemen, I made a final trip from Sana—to Marib, a town of mystery on the edge of the vast desert of Southern Arabia.

The ancient capital of the kingdom of Sheba is known to have had temples with square columns decorated with silver and gold, and ruins suggest that they were near Marib. Today, the area is occupied by fierce and independent Bedouin tribes.

A postwar expedition there by an American had to be abandoned by order of the king, and I very much doubted if I would be allowed a visit. But once again, luck was on my side.

A government mission had been formed to inspect the ruins—and barely two hours before their plane left, I was given permission to join them.

There is no proper road between Sana and Marib, and the journey takes eight days by mule or camel. By plane, it took only three-quarters of an hour. Beneath us stretched a desolate country, very different from the fertile mountains in the south or west of the Yemen.

Our Dakota landed with difficulty, and considerable risk, on a make-shift desert runway which was far too short. We clambered out and were surrounded by a wildly animated crowd. Two other Europeans had been invited along with me: an Italian doctor and a French archaeologist. Our little

OPEN TO VIEW

by JAMES LEES-MILNE

Drawn by ROWLAND HILDER



Milady of Cotehele came back from the dead—and terrified a thieving sexton

WHEN Richard Edgcumbe learned in 1483 that Edward IV had died and that his brother Richard, having declared himself King, had murdered Edward's two little sons in the Tower of London, he was deeply shocked. He declared himself a rebel against the Crown.

He was consequently outlawed, but lay in hiding at Cotehele, his ancient house perched on a hill above the River Tamar, in Cornwall. Here he was tracked down by the new king's local agent, Sir Henry Trenowth, who threw a cordon round Cotehele.

Edgcumbe cunningly slipped through, slit the throat of a luckless watchman, and fled towards the river, pursued by Trenowth.

But Edgcumbe was as wily as he was active. As Trenowth's men were almost upon him he tore off his cap, filled it with stones and threw it into the water. The pursuers, hearing the splash and then seeing the cap floating without an owner, concluded that he had drowned himself, and withdrew.

Edgcumbe eventually slipped away to Brittany, joined forces with Henry Tudor and fought for him with great gallantry at Bosworth, where Richard III lost his life.

Retribution soon overtook Sir

Henry Trenowth. His estates were forfeited and given to Edgcumbe, who enjoyed the added satisfaction of chasing him into the sea off the cliffs near Mevagissey, at a point now known as Bodrugan's Leap.

Where he had hidden from Trenowth, Edgcumbe built a chapel in memory of the incident. It stands at the edge of the cliff to this day and, with the house, is now owned by the National Trust.

Another Richard Edgcumbe was made a baron in 1742 by George II. Before his birth, his mother was thought to have died and her body was interred in the family vault. A week later, it is said, a sexton, attracted by a gold ring on her finger, tried to take it off. In the attempt he pinched the finger, whereupon the body moved in the coffin. The terrified sexton fled, leaving behind his lantern.

Lord Edgcumbe's mother then rose from her coffin and, carrying the lantern, walked back to Cotehele.

How to get there: Cotehele is fourteen miles from Plymouth, via Saltash Ferry. *Open:* May to September, daily except Mondays (but on Bank Holiday Mondays), 10 till 6; October to April, Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays, 2 till 6 or dusk if earlier.

group, though, passed unnoticed beside the great figure of Prince Hassan, who was leading the mission. The chieftains of the region rushed to him and kissed his hands.

They wore turbans and tunics dyed a brilliant, deep indigo. Their skin had gradually absorbed the dye until they merited their name of "Blue Bedouins."

In the middle of the inner courtyard of the Hakouma was a tall tower, and the prince invited me to enter it. I was allocated a room on an upper terrace. The prince took one which was small, but was also the highest and most open. Yemenite nobles are

always willing to sacrifice luxury for a beautiful view.

At dawn the next day I had to hurry to be ready to visit the famous Temple of the Moon-God. We all went by lorry. As it started off, some soldiers jumped on board and climbed over the bonnet uttering hideous cries in honour of the prince.

Although the temple is only six miles from Marib, I did not see its ruins until we were almost upon them. They are hidden in a fold of the rolling dunes which have covered the surrounding buildings.

An impressive colonnade led down to a sunken courtyard, the pavement

of which contained a series of pools for ritual ablutions. In a double row in the centre of the pavement were about forty columns which had supported the roof of the temple.

A doorway at the top of some steps opened into an oval enclosure built in 800 B.C., two hundred years after the Queen of Sheba. Not far from it, four columns rose above an empty grave.

Prince Hassan suddenly halted. A snake had emerged from the rocks in front of him. We sensed a crisis, because the royal family of the Yemen, heirs of the Semitic kings of the scriptures, are said to possess a supernatural control over snakes. I had a cook who, as a tiny child, was raised at the king's palace. He assured me that he had seen the king throw down a bundle of branches which had turned into snakes and wriggled away.

The king's brother did not turn this snake into a stick, but seized it with a lightning movement. The creature squirmed between his fingers. It was of a rare and dangerous species. One of the soldiers tore off his scarf and made a bag in which to carry it back to Sana.

We went back to Marib for lunch. In the lorry, level with my eyes, the bag containing the snake swung back and forth.

In the afternoon I was summoned to the house of the judge of Marib. An intensely dark stairway led to the roof, where his wives were waiting. From there, I looked down on the only well in the city. A camel was pumping up the water, and the wives explained that only the governor had the use of the animal, the other inhabitants being obliged to draw their water by hand. As might be expected, this rule had cut down the consumption.

ON my return to Sana, I told the Queen of my visit to the temple—and then my stay was over. My family was calling me home. A doctor had come to replace me, and the Imam sent word that I must leave.

When I think back on my friends the Yemenites, I think of their desire for knowledge. I remember the school-children of Sana who chanted to me their thanks for having taught them a few words of French; the slave girl who wished to learn to read; the old man who leaned against a tree beneath my window and listened to a recording of a symphony.

I also think of the great courage of the Yemenites. I will never forget Amina, who had just had a baby and came to the hospital at the first signs of pulmonary tuberculosis. Her husband, displeased at having a sick wife, wished to get rid of her. She was accompanied by her mother, an old woman who lept on the floor at the foot of her bed. And I had nothing with which to treat her.

One day I received a packet of streptomycin from France. There was enough for only one cure—but I had twenty-five patients who were hoping for it. The choice was up to me. It was a question of choosing the one most sure of being cured and living happily thereafter. Because Amina was twenty and because her happiness was not too distant to be recaptured, I chose her.

Nevertheless, I needed the agreement of the other patients, or my decision would only have added to their despair. Abdou fortunately understood the situation, and knew what had to be said. The women in the ward listened from their beds in silence. When he had finished, all together they thanked me spontaneously. There was neither bitterness nor jealousy; nor was there during the following weeks.

Amina's health improved, and those who suffered without hope loved her as the symbol of a better fate. Finally, her husband came to fetch her.

I told this story to the queen and the king's sister. The two women looked at each other, deeply moved, then prayed together.

THE END

Doctor Claudie Fayein's story will be published as "French Doctor In The Yemen" by Robert Hale in 1957.

WIN £1,000 CASH and SEE the FINAL TEST MATCH!

"I ONLY started *Bullets* last October," said Mr. J. S. Wood, 16 Villiers Drive, Arbourthorne, Sheffield. "So I was happy and surprised to get my First Prize telegram." With his £500 cheque came an invitation to the final Test Match—which he eagerly accepted.



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Most meritorious of the "£300 plus—" First Prize "Bullets" in Contests 2,049, 2,050, 2,051 and 2,052 wins £1,000 cash—the First Prize cheque with Tournament Award added.



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FIRST PRIZE, £300 (or £1,250, if Tournament winner) plus Continental Holiday for Two: Miss M. Davidson, (Staff) Convalescent Home, Gilsland, Carlisle.

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OTHER AWARDS: £9: Mrs. W. A. Ramsay, c/o Administrative Offices, Bensham Hospital, Gateshead: IN OUR LITTLE GARDEN—We "EXPAND"—We "SHIM"! £8: Mrs. D. Errington, Gilclose Cottage, Bury, Dulverton: THE BRITAIN WE WANT —LAND OF EARNED PLENTY! £7: F. W. Partridge, 22 Kent View Gardens, Ilford: A SNOOTY LOT—GIVING VILLAGE "GO-BY"—Pylons! £6: H. L. Leach, New Cottage, Hospital Grounds, Over, Gloucester: INTO THE BANK—"UMBRELLA" IN "COMPACT ROLL." £5: T. S. Feakins, 34 Swyncombe Avenue, London, W.5: THE BRITAIN WE WANT—TO "LEAVE BEHIND," Leading! £5: W. H. Martin, 132 Carlholme Road, Lincoln: IN GRANDPA'S PAST—THE SLAUGHTER! AND "LADY-KILLING"! £5: Mrs. E. R. Wilson, 111 Byerley Road, Shildon, Co. Durham: A SNOOTY LOT—BRITISH—ONLY HELP Everybody! For ten winners of £2 10s., see "Bullets" Bulletin. 50 Special Awards and 1,500 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted. (Tournament winner will be announced in JOHN BULL dated August 25.)

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL, dated Sept. 1), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, August 18, for early news of No. 2,050 result.)

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 2,050, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.).

Shaving: THE FACTS

Every man who has ever had a shave at the barber's knows he gets a better, cleaner, closer shave than he gets with an ordinary safety razor.

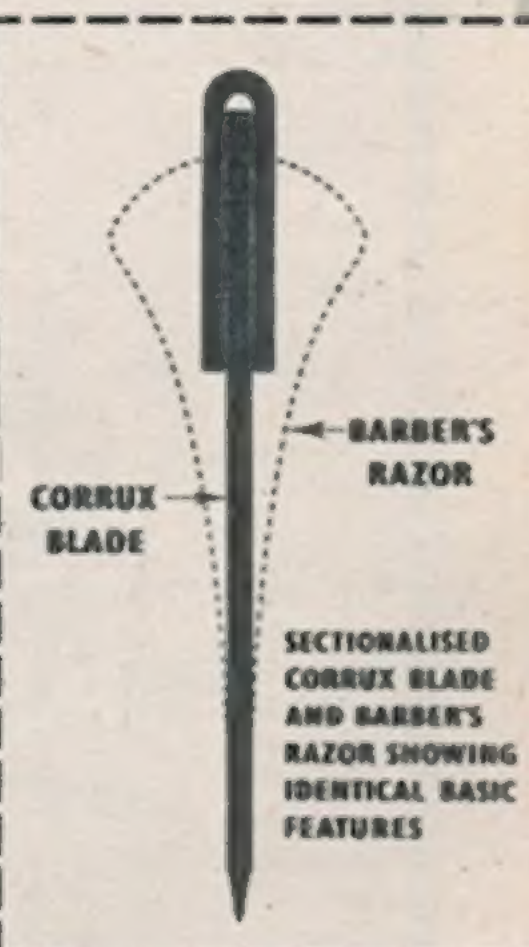
Why? Because the barber's razor (1) takes the stubble at the best cutting angle; (2) has weight behind the blade; (3) has a rigid blade.

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On The Economic Rocks
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Up Went The Curtain And
That Bulldog
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He's Only Sixty-five, But

Legacy Of Summer
Just Pawns
Waiting, Waiting, Waiting
Hitting The Children
Stream Of Cars
Dangerous Animal
Drowned
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Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions

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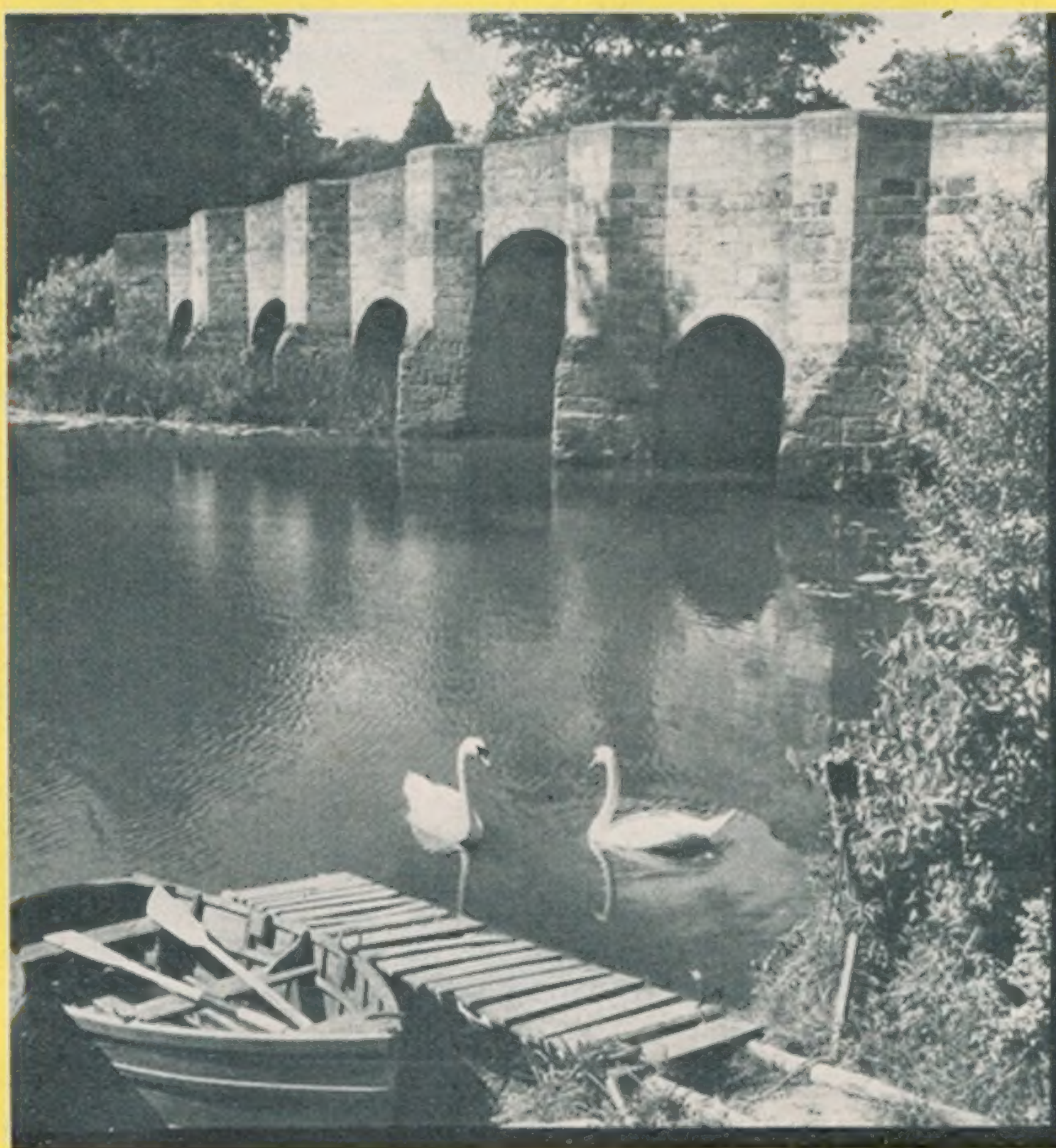
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